

ADAM

2/
SEPTEMBER, 1963

FACT • FICTION • HUMOR



GULF OF THE STAKE GOD

ORANGE



See! No dandruff.



ADAM

SEPTEMBER • 1963

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Maybe he could hurl himself overboard without being shot. Then, if the shots missed him and the police in the other boat didn't catch him, there were only the sharks . . . always the sharks.

FICTION • BRENT AUDLEY

ALIBI *for* DANGER

THE drums quackened and the girls swooping body leapt instantly into the convulsive new rhythm. McKeefry pushed at the table with his fat belly and his pudgy hand fell away from the tall glass of cold Dutch beer. There was a flurry of smooth black hair and the flash of a naked thigh as the girl started across the backwash-thin floor.

"She's something," McKeefry croaked without moving his greedy eyes.

"Yes," said Jackson quietly, "she really is something." He was sitting back from the table with his long legs stuck out in front of him. He wasn't relaxed, though. On the contrary — Jackson's lean, hard figure was as tense as a coiled steel spring. He waited in cold silence for the fat engineer to start the inevitable questions.

"What's her name?" began McKeefry a moment or two later.

"Stefanie," supplied Jackson and silently he cursed the policeman, Herard. If he were to himself, that Frenchman managed to keep my liaison-officer job down to this level of "entertaining visiting engineers," I'll kill him.

"How did you reckon she'd be?" said McKeefry. "Seventeen?"

"No. Stefanie's nearly 30."

"They, you know this girl pretty well?"

"This is a small island," side-stepped Jackson.

"Still without moving his eyes from the girl, McKeefry gestured with one arm.

"She's not like any of these," he said. "His movement had embraced half the population of Jarrot's Bay. Jackson, to his turn, looked slowly round the crowded, smoky room. There were more white men than usual, but then they always came on the nights Stefanie was dancing. McKeefry

meant the natives — the local Melanesians, the Asians from French Indo-China, the half-castes and the group of broken-down Tahitian women drinking beer in one corner.

"No," said Jackson evenly. "Stefanie's mother was half-French, half-Tahitian. Her father was English — a marine biologist who came out here a long time ago. They're both dead now. Stefanie has a little money — but she loves to dance...."

"That I can see," testified the fat man. "The drums were working to a crescendo now and the girls' indecent body caught every beat with her hips, hands and shoulders. Despite himself, Jackson was caught up in the general movement as every man in the room leaned a little closer to the half-naked girl. Then he heard a hard, urgent voice close by his ear.

"Outside, Mike — quick!"

The Indian officer whipped round and saw the giant figure of Koro. Without a moment's hesitation Jackson followed the big man.

Part Asian, part-French, Koro had once worked for Stefanie's father. Now, thanks to Mike Jackson, he worked for Consolidated Mining Industries and was the best friend Jackson had in the world.

Outside, in the yellow light of the veranda, Koro looked hard into Jackson's eyes.

"Where were you this afternoon?" he demanded.

"At Tulagi."

"You have had no accident?"

Jackson shook his head. "What do you mean?"

"Did anyone see you at Tulagi?"

"Just about the entire staff of the mine. I took up that job of last-happy land in there. He's a CMI man. Now what's this about?" Herard?"

"Yes. A man was killed out at Bernal Village about an hour ago. You know Chong's, the gambling house?"

Jackson nodded and Koro, leading his friend off the veranda and down into the darkened road, continued. "A man I know saw it — lucky for you, Mike. He heard shouting, then two men came out of Chong's. One was a white man, the other a Melanesian. They argued in the street and it looked as though they were going to fight. Anyway, the Melanesian ran off down the road. The white man got into his car and followed him. Just before Bernal bridge the car ran the native boy down. He was killed immediately, but the car didn't stop. Well, maybe it was an accident, Mike, but Herard's policemen are up at Bernal now searching everything to cut their boss. By the time they've finished it's going to look like deliberate murder."

Jackson swore violently. Up until now he'd thought Herard was out to get him by keeping everything so quiet and peaceful that CMI just wouldn't need a liaison officer any more. It had been working too. That's how he'd been reduced to playing tourist-guide to stoke him McKeefry. Well, at least he had a job to do now.

"Of course it was a CMI car?" he asked Koro.

"It was a white Citroën."

"What?" Jackson's mind reeled. There were only two white Citroën's on the island, his own and the one belonging to Marshall Edison, CMI's director. Marshall Edison was no more likely to visit Chong's than he was to bring his wife into Jarrot's bar.

Jackson made the quick obvious decision.

(Continued on page 47)





JAKE HOUSMAN: BOSS OF BAWDY

Run off the US mainland, he set up the wildest off-shore "hotel" the world had ever seen — a sailor's paradise, loaded with his own private collection of the best in anything-goes women.

"GET dressed, damn you! Women are coming here. Women, you stupid, lazy, good-for-nothing scoundrels! Get me five tents."

Mack Hingham's shouted words jolted his sleepy Indian partner full awake. The old man was rubbing a knuckle into a bloodshot eye and jabbing a trembling forefinger out the door of their crude

hut down toward the beach and the dock. Tip Indian, a muscular youth named Harry Big Toe, looked that way and his eyes widened in disbelief.

A group of women — he was too excited to count them — were swaggering large as life along the deck, twirling colorful parasols and rolling big hips. "Fence women!" Hingham roared, hopping outside on one foot as he tried to get into his pants and walk at the same time. "And on our island, Harry!"

The hobbling Hingham was so flustered at the parade of pukebrude on the desolate Florida key that he failed to notice a man who stood just outside the hut door watching Hingham and the Indian with calculating eyes.

"Not your island, old man," the stranger said suddenly. "And not your women."

Hingham tripped and fell down

at the sound of the voice. From the ground he peered up at the man.

What he saw took the good feeling out of him. The newcomer was about 27 or 28 years old, not quite as tall as the Indian or as muscular but with enough brawn to him to merit respect. He had a sea captain's blue cap set rakishly on dark, curly hair, a lean, sharp featured face, and hooded eyes that shifted around respectfully. Cold eyes.

"I'm Jake Housman," the man said. "The women belong to me and I'm taking over this hot for now, and the island for all time."

Old Hingham got to his feet. He had spent half his life living on the remote Florida isle he had named Indian Key.

"Nobody takes my island, mister," he said. He gestured impatiently at the Indian. "All right, Harry. Don't break this fellow, just



FACT • LAWRENCE S. MONROE

HOUSE ISLAND

hand him a little. Afterward, you can have a turn with his women, then send them all packing in their little boat.

Harry Big Toe and the old man had a nice maritime wrecking business going for themselves. Harry liked the way things were. He relished the easy life on the remote coral reef and he enjoyed the occasional trip to Key West, where money Bingham gave him bought whisky and female companionship and where he had fun at the traveling fairs boasting professional wreckers and weightlifters in the sidewalks and proving that he, Harry Big Toe, was undisputed strong man of the Florida Keys.

Harry gathered his championship muscles and lunged menacingly at Houseman.

The smaller man, stooped with the charge, tripped Harry with a booted foot, hammered a ball

flat down on to the off-balanced Indian's nose and smashed it to pulp. Harry Big Toe screamed and sprawling in the dirt.

"I said I was taking over this Key. Work with me, old man, and we'll get along. Maybe you'll get rich. Fight me, and you'll lose a hell of a lot."

The girls, three of them, had crossed the beach and arrived at the hut. They began to throw Bingham's and Harry's possessions out of the crude structure while Jake Houseman stood glaring, holding his knife pointed casually at the two outraged islanders.

"Houseman!" old Bingham rasped, "who are you? Who is hell are you?"

Jacob Houseman wasn't "in hell" but in the short span of his young life he arrived at that destination had already been closely insured. The son of a wealthy ship operator, Houseman had been born

and reared in New York City. He quickly tired of the unexciting freight-hauling business his father took him into. Jake — as his waterfront friends called him — was a burly shakedown with a sullen nature, an easy dominance over the opposite sex, and a liking for cards and quick money.

At 21 he came of age and high-tailed one of his father's schooners, setting his course for the West Indies, after hearing on the waterfront that a man could live a wild and enjoyable life there with the expenditure of little labor. The schooner sprung a leak and Houseman was forced to put into Key West for repairs.

Immediately the tall youth stood up the bustling town as a likely place for a man without scruples. The chief activity in Key West in the 1880s was the business of professional marine wrecking — towing distressed ships for a fat pre-



"Okay, let's reconstruct the crime once more, and this time be sure the gun isn't loaded."

fit, or salvaging crippled vessels abandoned during storms. Using his schooner, the *Fortunate Lure*, young Housman launched himself on a career in competition with some of America's worst cut-throats and human vultures.

The marine wreckers had an edge on the newcomer since they knew the geography of the great reef as they knew their own ugly faces in a mirror. At the first warning blast of a conch-shell horn, each man would dash for the wharf where speedy sloops and schooners were moored.

The mad race for a hapless ship was on. They ran with their "Georgia bundles" — spare clothing and hastily scrounged-up food — and sailed toward the distressed vessel. This was no game for the weak or the hesitant. Wreckers shot or knifed rivals to death in their chase to be first to reach a fat and helpless prize ship. If a skipper balked at a wrecker's salvage terms, there were special ways of handling these business negotiations. In one year 16 sea captains disappeared at sea or were found dead in Key West waters after hanging with wreckers on ever financial terms or fees for salvage operations.

Jack Housman, despite his inexperience, used his wits, fists, knife and gun to back his way into the wrecker trade. He worked a new angle. If business was slow, he would cast adrift a small boat with lanterns to lure ships in foggy waters on to the dangerous reefs. Because they were ready and waiting, Housman and his men were always first to "rescue" these wayward vessels. Distressed sea captains found his terms the worst of all. Frequently they were forced into awarding him as much as 80 percent of the total

value of ship and cargo.

Within five years, by 1885, Housman owned six speedy vessels which he used in the wrecking trade. At the age of 26 he was commonly regarded as the richest man in Key West. The *St. Augustine Tribune* and editorially: "This unscrupulous but able young man

from Michigan has been able to amass a fortune of 500,000 dollars, thanks to too harsh methods with competitors and his merciless profits extracted from hapless captains. But the greater portion of his wealth comes from the repulsive profession of prostitution. Mr. Housman has made Key West a place of shame with his two brothels, which operate 24 hours a day to serve wreckers and mariners who think nothing of leaving their entire pay with the mercenary Housman."

The young man from Marquette had been quick to see that Key West was an all-male community except for a scattering of Indian women and a handful of teenage skinned howls from Jamaica. The more respectable men wrote to churches or agencies in the North to obtain mail-order wives. But other wreckers, their pockets filled with money turned in desperation to the Indian and Jamaican prostitutes who were described by an early Florida physician, Dr. Samuel Sumner as "the saddest collection of disease-ridden female creatures I have encountered in a 40-year medical practice."

In this mad situation opportunist Jake Housman saw the gleam of gold.

He imported to Key West a group of young women who literally knocked the eyes out of the long-suffering wreckers. Housman's first bargain was called the Impe-



"The lesson, boys, you don't want information to be forever lost in the space race."

rial Palace, a swanky name for a structure put together from cedar and mahogany planks salvaged from wrecked ships. Lashed by frequent hurricanes, Key West was a builder's nightmare, yet Houseman could boast that even during the worst storms "business transactions" would never be interrupted in his place.

"Take off your hats and see that your shoes are clean!" Houseman would roar at nervous male patrons as they entered the place. "You men are accustomed to pay when. Pay, up, behave yourselves, and you're welcome. Dirty a rug or start trouble, and you'll answer to me!"

The wreckers, sailors, and townsmen of Key West gawked respectfully around Houseman's play house. The Palace was staffed by 15 girls Houseman had carefully gathered in New Orleans, Savannah, St. Augustine, Havana, and even as far north as Boston. Their sleek bodies gleamed amid luxury furnishings swiped from wrecked vessels and salvaged corpses. Cigar boxes, briefs, suitcases, Oriental rugs, silver, and a highly polished spruce piano held the men in awe.

Even Houseman was fascinated by the piano, the only such instrument in Key West. When in his cups, he frequently sang ballads taught to him by his long-dead mother. He impulsively decided to hold a "musical concert" and invited Key West's leading citizens and their families to attend. Accompanied on the piano by a society-lad named Clark Edmonds, the king of wreckers presented a program of vocal selections.

The town fathers attended only out of a disinclination to tangle with tough Jake Houseman, and as Jake belted out songs in his booming voice, they began to shift uneasily in their seats and look about for something more interesting.

A hardware store owner named Thomas Traynor slipped away from his battle-axe wife and was coaxed upstairs by one of Houseman's young women, Abel's Howland, a furniture salesman, stepped out onto the front porch to get some air and smoke a cigar. He was followed by a Boston girl, Nancy Meredith, who had the distinction of being the youngest prostitute in the Palace—she was just 15.

Howland's wife looked around during an intermission and found Abel with Nancy in an upstairs room. The girl's pining shriek and Mrs. Howland's grim parent of her half-naked spouse cut onto the street broke up the concert.

The infuriated vocalist, Jake Houseman, cursed the two brawls who had entranced his guests and ruined his musical debut.

Angry now that concerts and prostitution didn't mix, Houseman turned all his attention on his first love — money. With the profits reaped in from the Imperial Palace, he began building a second establishment. New girls for this house arrived aboard the packet Posthog,



"You don't understand. The reason you always find me with other men is I'm trying to build up my residence to them!"

in the chairs of men who jammed the Key West pier.

With two lawdyhouses going full blast, Jake Houseman now turned to the development of his wrecking business. The strong-arm men forced Key West shippers and businessmen into awarding him profitable contracts for diving, lightering, warehousing and storage. With this, in addition to his wrecking take, Houseman was riding high and handsome. Success upon success made him more arrogant than ever, and his behavior became unbearable.

On August 15, 1897, an auction of salvaged merchandise was held to dispose of the cargo of a wrecked brig, the *New London Queen*. It was a rich haul—copper from Cuba, cochineal, sugar, molasses and coffee from Mexico. Jake Houseman estimated the value of these goods at \$25,000 dollars, and he was furious that his own men had failed to reach the *New London Queen* in time to claim her cargo.

He tried to rig the bidding through the auctioneer. "I'll make

it worth your wife, Charlie," he told 60-year-old Charles Ellison. "If you can think up some way to disqualify the other bidders, say they're not financially responsible or their permits won't valid—any way you can do it, it's worth a thousand to me if you knock that cargo down to 25,000 dollars."

Ellison was a dignified Savannah operator with a reputation for honesty. "Submer a decent bid and you'll have a chance," he said flatly to the king of the Key West.

"All I ask is a favor. There's plenty in it for you," Houseman said.

"That's cheating, Houseman," Ellison snapped. "I'm not stealing a cargo for you by rigging out the others."

The auctioneer used a school-teacher-as-arrest boy tone, and this was a mistake.

Cloaking with anger, Houseman grabbed up a belaying pin and swung it at Ellison's head. The blow caught the auctioneer on the left temple.

(Continued on page 54)

Thousands of men and women are murdered each year, and their killers have gone scot-free because of one small loophole in America's crime fighting setup . . .

JOHNSON Henry Jordan got away with murder. He got away with it 12 times to be exact. Something that could never happen in Australia.

A not too successful rock 'n roll singer who worked the cheaper nightclubs and roadhouses in the Southwest, the 28-year-old Jordan devised a peculiar scheme to supplement his skimpy income. Whenever he ran low on the cash he needed for women, booze or clothing, he killed.

Jordan picked his victims with

care, which was one ingredient of his success.

No matter what town he was in, Jordan headed for the local Skid Row when the time came for him to kill again. He'd hang around a bar, liquor store or grocery and wait until an elderly man cashed a cheque. For, Jordan knew thousands of aged persons staked out an existence on tiny pension cheques, living on Skid Row because rents were cheap.

When Jordan spotted a victim, he would follow as the man stag-

gered out with a pair of gin in his hand, a stolen check under his belt, or a package of groceries under his arm.

At a dark alley, or a vacant lot, Jordan would slip up behind the man and grab him in a mug lock around the throat. And he wouldn't let go until he choked the life out of his weak, unresisting victim. After rifling his pockets, Jordan would pull out a flask from under his shirt and force about a pint of cheap wine into the dead man's mouth.

In each of his dozen murders, whether in Texas, Oklahoma or New Mexico, the coroner would automatically bring in a verdict of death due to overindulgence of alcohol. After all, the deaths of elderly wines are common. Any

Murder Comes



coroner's coroner was able to recognize the symptoms of a third blow death.

This was the basic ingredient of Jordan's success.

But Jordan struck out on his 13th killing. His victim, Joseph Strider was no different from the others. There was nothing about him to set off an investigation. Jordan's only mistake was that this time he killed in Houston, Texas.

Unlike the large majority of coroners in the United States, Houston has abolished the coroner and replaced him with a trained staff of medical examiners.

And when he performed a routine autopsy on Jordan's latest victim, Houston's Chief Medical Examiner, Dr Joseph A. Jachim-

ovsky, discovered a tiny hook in the hyoid, a small bone, located in the upper part of the neck, to which the tongue muscles are attached.

Dr Jachimovsky immediately alerted detectives.

"It looks like a murder," he said. "That bone is pretty tough and only an extreme amount of pressure or a sharp blow could have cracked it. I'd say this man was strangled."

Homicide investigators rounded up the dead man's companions and neighbors. Among them was a middle-aged prostitute who frequented the run-down club in which Jordan was then entertaining, and who had seen the singer strangle the old man through the streets, the night before. Taken

to headquarters, Jordan promptly broke down and confessed. He also described in detail the murder of his 12 previous victims.

"I'm glad you got me," Jordan said. "I was gonna keep killing until I got caught."

Jordan pleaded guilty to murder and is now serving 35 years in the State penitentiary.

The strange case of John Henry Jordan points up a terrifying fact—in most communities in the country, anyone with a smidgen of know-how can get away with murder, because local officials don't spot the crime when they see it.

In fact, more than 5000 persons get away with murder every year in the 50 States, just as Jordan did, simply because their crime goes unrecognized for the premeditated murder it is.

In about 40 States, and in some two-thirds of the more than 3000 counties in the nation, county coroners have the sole responsibility for investigating and determining the cause of sudden or suspicious deaths. But a US county coroner doesn't have to have a drop of medical knowledge to get his job, and as things work out, he rarely knows anything about scientific crime detection.

And even when a coroner is a doctor, it's a mistake to think he's any more qualified at detecting murder than a farmer is. Few medical men can perform an autopsy properly. Few doctors have ever tried it at all. Forensic medicine, the art of determining the cause of death through scientific examination of internal organs, blood and microscopic tissues, is a highly specialized art, and takes specialized knowledge and years of experience. Some of John Jordan's victims were actually attacked by coroners who were general practitioners, but who missed murder as the cause of death as badly as the non-medical coroners did. As we've seen, it took a trained pathologist to spot Jordan's murdering hand.

What the widespread prevalence of unskilled coroners means, of course, is that a big loophole for murder exists in America.

Clever killers simply can't be caught unless all unexplained or sudden deaths are carefully investigated through post-mortems and chemical analysis. But few coroners ever bother to consult medical experts.

"When a man is dead a doctor won't do him any good," one Midwestern coroner recently said in one of the most remarkable statements of the century. "When I go to the death scene I try to get the facts. I don't give the body more than a quick look."

A few years ago, for example, a man's body was found lying face up on the floor of his cabin in a rural area of Kentucky. The coroner was summoned and took one last look at the dead man from a few feet away.

"Died of heart failure," he pro-

Easy

FACT • ANTHONY SCADUTO





"And just where in hell am I supposed to get a girl?"

nauged. Then he returned to his full-time job — pig farming.

When an ambulance attendant later lifted the body to a stretcher he was horrified to find a knife buried deep in the man's back.

Survey after survey by medical and criminological groups have turned up the same kind of thing every year: new "heart failure" coroners often list "heart failure" as the cause of death for any man over 40 as long as there's no knife in his heart, or if he died in bed. Actually, in the Alice in Wonderland world of the coroner, almost anyone found dead in bed is assumed to have died from natural causes.

Death certificates signed by coroners have listed such varied causes of death as: "Found dead in a storage," or "Found dead on the street." Many coroners report have read of suspicious deaths: "Could be tuberculosis, diabetes or indigestion."

And then the cases were marked dead, with no further investigations conducted. Naturally, all this is an engraved invitation to murder.

The consequences of the antiquated coroner system, which began in the Middle Ages and has barely changed since then, are dramatically illustrated by the bizarre case of Henry Marshall, the Agriculture Department official who investigated the shooting and death of Eddie Earl Eaton.

Marshall apparently was one of the first in small illegality in Eaton's operations and he quietly began an investigation. On the evening of June 3, 1963, Marshall's battered, bullet-riddled body was found in a lonely pasture on his 1500 acre ranch near Franklin, Texas. He had been shot five times in the stomach with his own .24 rifle.

A Justice of the Peace — one of those medically untrained men who sits as coroner in most parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona and New Mexico — examined the body by flashlight. He glanced at the contact wounds in the abdomen. He examined the right eye, protruding out of its socket from a sharp blow on the forehead. Then he ruled the death a suicide!

Henry Marshall simply couldn't buried and forgotten.

But not forever. Within a couple of months Eddie Earl's public had burst, and Congress forced investigations into his operations created national head lines. In May, 1964, a Texas grand jury started digging into Marshall's strange death, and the body was ordered exhumed. Marshall's remains were sent to Houston where Dr. Jachimovsky — the same Medical Examiner who books John Henry Jordan's string of murders as No 13 — performed an autopsy.

The verdict: "probable homicide."

"It is, in fact, this is suicide," Dr. Jachimovsky concluded. "It is the most unusual one I have seen during the examination of about 15,000 dead persons."

For one thing, the pathologist pointed out, there were the wounds themselves. Marshall was killed with a rifle which has to be manually loaded to get each shot in the firing chamber. He would have had to shoot himself, open the shell and get another one positioned, shoot himself again, and repeat the movements until he had fired five shots.

But at least three of the shots, the Medical Examiner found, were "inexpedient." Which means that any one of them would have knocked Marshall out of consciousness so that it would have been physically impossible for him to have fired the other two.

There's not all Dr. Jachimovsky found. Marshall's lungs, it turned out, had about 30 percent concentration of carbon monoxide in them at the time of death. That's almost enough to kill, and certainly enough to knock a man unconscious. Yet the motor in his pick-up truck was turned off when his body was found, so he could not have inhaled the fumes as he lay dying some 50 feet away from the vehicle. And if he had inhaled the fumes before being shot, and through some superhuman effort not lost consciousness, then he certainly would not have had enough co-ordination left to put five closely spaced shots into his own body.

Henry Marshall simply couldn't have committed suicide.

It's too late now, to do much about it. Eddie Earl was recently sentenced to eight years at hard labor in one swindle and faces about 100 years more if convicted on a dozen other State and Federal indictments. And the killer of Henry Marshall had almost a year's start on the FBI and the Texas Rangers.

Contrast Marshall's death with the case of Sally Kestner.

Lovely Sally, a shapely blonde secretary, never got more than a few hours head start on police when she killed her boyfriend. Her carefully plotted murder blew up in her face because she made a ghastly mistake — she killed the guy in New York, a town which persisted in the Medical Examiner system by abolishing the cor-

ment corner's office in 1918 and —clucking it with skilled medical objectives.

In New York, as in most cities with a Medical Examiner, any death away from home, hospital or where no doctor is in attendance, or which is unexpected, legally requires the attention of a Medical Examiner.

"In the morgue," Dr. Milton Halpern, New York Chief Medical Examiner, says, "secrets have no place to hide."

Sally Roszby's secret had lost its hiding place in the morgue. A 26-year-old divorcee, she hit the headlines in November, 1968, when she was found lying in the parking lot of a hospital in Brooklyn, two bullet wounds in her abdomen and one in her thigh.

Four feet away lay the body of her former, Arthur Hill, 38, who had been honorably discharged from the Air Force a month earlier. There were two bullets in his chest. A .32 caliber Beretta automatic rested lightly in his open palm.

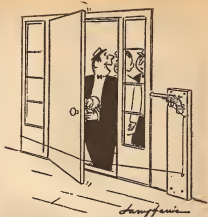
"Art shot me," Sal moaned when she was found by guards. "I don't know why."

As doctors operated, detectives found the motive for the shooting in her handbag. A note she had written to Hill, but had never mailed, said: "I'm sorry, Art, I will not stay engaged or be your girl any longer."

Obviously Hill had become enraged at the broken engagement and shot Sally. Then he turned the gun on himself.

"Fired Sister Shoots Blame and Kills Self," headlines screamed later that day.

In 2000 coroner "counties" throughout the nation, that headline would have been the final verdict. But not in New York.



"I haven't been in here since the former tenant left. Nice people . . . no parties on the best of terms."

Hill's body was taken to the morgue at Bellevue Hospital, where Dr. Irving S. Wedding, an Assistant Medical Examiner, performed the post mortem.

On opening the ex-flier's body Dr. Wedding discovered that one slug

had cut through the upper right arm, right chest, lung and windpipe and lodged at the fourth rib on the left side. The other slug had cut through the right chest lung and heart, coming to a stop in the left lung. Dr. Wedding carefully traced the trajectories of the slugs again and again. Then he heard his report.

"This could not have shot himself with either his left or right hand," the doctor said. "The bullet entered the body at such an angle that it was impossible for him to have fired the shots himself."

As a result of the medical report, detectives and the FBI began a murder investigation less than one day after Hill's death. The first step was tracing the gun. In Atlanta, Georgia, Federal agents located a gun dealer who revealed selling the Beretta to Sally Roszby two weeks before the shooting. She had used an assumed name, but the dealer was able to identify her picture.

Her elaborate plans blown to pieces by the Medical Examiner, Sally was charged with manslaughter. A jury agreed with the prosecutor's charge that she had murdered her boyfriend and then carefully fired three bullets into non-vital areas of her body to make it appear that she was the victim, and she was sent to the pen.



"That's Sally for you . . . always fishing for compliments!"

(Continued on page 46)

HE DARED A SHARK-



Sir Frank Beaurepaire was a three-Olympics representative swimmer and a top-level Australian industrialist. He has an eminent place in sporting history as the most durable of the nation's great swimmers at international level.

SPORT • KEN RAYMOND

By 1906 young Frank Beaurepaire had won numerous swimming trophies. Here he is shown at the age of 18 proudly displaying his well-earned gains.

Two years before the war, Frank Beaurepaire was a keen motorcyclist. It helped to keep him fit and in training.



AND BUILT A FORTUNE

IN the early afternoon of Saturday, January 4, 1922, lifeguards of Coogee Beach and North Beach Clubs were busy in the Coogee clubhouse with last-minute preparations for an interclub carnival at the local beach.

Some of their colleagues already had taken the plunge for a boobying-up swim. One of these was 18-year-old Coogee chairman Milton Singleton Coughlan, son of the Randwick postmaster.

Coughlan swam well out from the beach in "The Reef," 30 to 40 yards off the rocks at the foot of Coogee's southern headland, where big breakers were rising to give surf-bathers long rides to the beach. He cracked it for one shot, swam back and caught a second wave battled once more through the pounding surf to swim yet another. This time he had gone out a little too far to catch a ride on waves that passed him as big green swells to pick up surfers a few yards closer inshore.

For a few moments Coughlan was alone, rising and falling with the swell as he awaited the "howler" that comes along every now and then. At last he saw it rising and turned to swim hard in its sucking trough.

Lifeguards watching from the clubhouse on the rocks, saw the wave break and expected Coughlan's head and shoulders to shoot out from its rising white foam. He did not appear. One or two glanced back to where he had begun to swim to catch the wave. They saw him struggling with a shark in a patch of his own blood spreading on the sea.

Jack Chalmers, of the North Beach Club, was the first to recover from the stunning horror of the sight.

"Good God," he cried. "A shark's got him. Come on! Grab that reel."

Only one reel was in reserve in the clubhouse, the others having been taken to the beach for the surf carnival. This one hooked a bait, but Chalmers knotted the line around his waist as he ran across the rocks, with other lifeguards bearing the reel running behind him. In his haste Chalmers slipped and his head struck a rock. He was momentarily dazed but recovered quickly and ran on to the edge of the rocks. Almost without missing a stride he plunged into the sea as a receding wave sucked back from the rocks. He swam toward Coughlan, who was still trying to fight off the shark.

The shark had bitten off Coughlan's right arm at the elbow in its first attack. He was now try-



Group picture of the Sydney Referee's 1922 contest of the dramatic Coogee beach shark rescue by Chalmers and Beaurogatre.

ing to batter it with his left fist. He punched it a few times before the shark seized the left arm and hung on to it. Coughlan was helpless as Chalmers reached him and literally tore him from the shark's jaws. Blood gushed from the stump of Coughlan's right arm and from the mangled left arm, hanging lifeless by a strip of flesh.

"Don't let go of me, Jack," Coughlan pleaded, as Chalmers took him firmly under the armpits and the reel team began to haul on the line.

Meanwhile, Frank Beaurogatre, a chairman of Chalmers and a two Olympic representative swimmer, heard the commotion and ran to the clubhouse's first-floor

veranda. When he saw what was going on he vaulted the veranda rail and ran across the rocks to plunge in and join Chalmers in the rescue. Three times crashing waves hurled him back on to jagged rocks that chopped and sliced into his flesh. At the fourth attempt he swam clear and stroked powerfully toward Chalmers, who was just about to reach Coughlan. Henry Fletcher, also a member of the North Beach Club, was swimming out from the beach.

Chalmers' plight was desperate. Without a life-saving belt to give him buoyancy and with the weight of the dying Coughlan in his arms he sank beneath the surface at

HE DARED A SHARK — AND BUILT A FORTUNE



Australia's 1934 Games swimmers: Beaurepaire, lower right with Ben. Standing, l. to r., Clotilde, Steinhorn, Henry and Charlton.

such level on the line. He was near exhaustion from his dash across the rocks, his head spun through the heavy surf and his vigorous kicking to shore off the blood-hungry shark now circling him and Coughlin. He was in danger of drowning or of having to fight off another attack from the shark.

Then Beaurepaire reached him. He seized the back of Chalmers' full length costume with one hand and with his free arm and his powerful trudgeon kick, kept Chalmers and Coughlin afloat while they were hauled to the rocks. The attacking shark and two others that had swirled the blood followed them all the way. As the three men were drawn close to the rocks an onlooker named Charles Green, fully clothed, jumped into the water to help lift them out and to splash about to keep the sharks at bay.

When Coughlin was borne away on a stretcher to a waiting ambulance, in which he died on the way

to hospital, Chalmers said to Beaurepaire, "I was about done when you got to us, Frank. Thanks."

This was Sydney's first surf beach tragedy.

In the mourning for Coughlin the city did not forget to acknowledge the incredible bravery of those who had exposed themselves to permanent risk of the same horrifying death in trying to save him.

The Royal Shipwreck and Relief Humane Society of NSW awarded Beaurepaire and Chalmers each its gold medal and certificate of merit for "exceptional and unexcelled bravery." Fletcher and Green each received the Society's certificate. The Australian Surf Life-Saving Association bestowed upon Beaurepaire and Chalmers its Silver Medal of Merit and the Hon. Hugh D. McIntosh made a personal gift to Beaurepaire of a gold medal set with diamonds and pearls.

A newspaper opened a fund

which raised £2000 from public subscription. Beaurepaire and Chalmers each received half.

Frank Beaurepaire was then 31 years old, and well on the way to an eminent place in Australia's sporting history as the most durable of the nation's upcoming list of great competitive swimmers at international level. It is astonishing today, when most world-class swimmers are "burned out" in their early 30s, to reflect that Beaurepaire when in his mid-30s was swimming against and beating often enough, such celebrated performers as Sweden's Arne Borg (then half Beaurepaire's age), America's Johnny Weissmuller, Australia's "Boy" Charlton, Moss Christie and others of great renown. In a career lasting nearly 30 years Beaurepaire won more than 200 first-class championships in many countries and represented Australia at three Olympic Games—the last 15 years after the first.

The remarkable qualities that enabled him to brush aside a childhood physical handicap and advancing years to establish such a rare record carried him to equal success as a businessman—in deed, to the topmost level of Australia's industrialists. One does not underrate the man's achievements in business and public life in wondering if these could have been quite so spectacular if the public had not recognized his bravery in the Coughlin rescue with a substantial cash gift.

For this money gave him the capital to establish the beginnings of a vast Australian industry in defiance of immense American interests then dominating the world's tyre markets. This was the Beaurepaire Tyre Service, from which he built a personal fortune of £1 million and an industry whose assets exceeded £20 million when he died in 1955, in plunging his nose at tremendous risk and with powerful American rubber companies. Beaurepaire again demonstrated the courage and determination to succeed that brought him outstanding sporting success and sent him racing to Milton Coughlin's aid on that awful day in the Cooper surf.

As he progressed in business he became increasingly dedicated to public service, for which he was justly rewarded with a knighthood, membership of the Victorian Parliament and the Lord Mayoralty of Melbourne. As a philanthropist he gave unpublished and often anonymous help to many causes. Among his known benefactions was a £200,000 gift to found the Beaurepaire Physical Education Centre at the University of Melbourne. Not surprisingly, the basis of this Centre was an Olympic-standard swimming pool but it included also a gymnasium, assembly hall, study facilities and other amenities.

Appalled by shockingly high drowning fatality figures summer after summer, Beaurepaire was the moving force in Victoria's learn-to-swim campaign for chil-



The swimming pool at the Beaupaire physical education centre, Melbourne University. Sir Frank made this possible with a £200,000 grant to the University.



The first headquarters of the Beaupaire Free Service, in Latrobe Street, Melbourne. The parking meter came long after 1932.

dron and adults that has saved many thousands of lives. Also noteworthy among his public services is the dominant part he played, by persistent lobbying and persuasive argument in helping to obtain for Melbourne the honor of being host city for the 1956 Olympic Games.

In his distinguished swimming career Frank Beaupaire started far behind scratch in many handicap races. Invariably, though, he kept a stroke or two ahead of the handicapper, even when he had to concede opponents such great starts that it seemed he could not possibly win.

Yet in none of those races was he as far behind scratch as in his

first entry into business, with a virtually empty pocket and no assets but a fierce determination to succeed. Author Graham Larnes, in the fascinating Beaupaire biography aptly titled "The Will To Win," describes how he won this race, too.

Any attempt in this article to look more than briefly at Beaupaire the businessman would be redundant to Larnes' excellent biography. But as a matter of general interest, and particularly for younger-generation Australians, we review in more detailed flashback the extraordinary achievements of Beaupaire the swimmer.

Francis Joseph Edmund Beaupaire was born in Melbourne on May 12, 1881, of a sire from whom he inherited an almost aggressive determination to get somewhere in this world, against any odds. Papa Beaupaire first saw Australia at the age of 14, when he sailed here, as a midshipman, from his native England. Melbourne, and the attractions of a pioneering life in the colony so captivated him that he agreed off his ship and stayed. He married, before his 20th birthday, Mary Edith Larnes, who was born at Mount Gambier of Yorkshire parents. Frank was their first child. Lily (who swam her way into the 1932 Olympic team with Frank) arrived two years afterwards. Ernest David was their third and last child.

Beaupaire Senior's first job in his married life was as a gripman on Melbourne's cable cars. This was hardly the calling for a man of his burning ambition as, to accumulate finance for a more rewarding enterprise, he began to

peddle tea among workmates. Soon this extended to selling tea and general groceries to South Melbourne businesses in a door-to-door run for which he acquired a horse and buggy. Later he set up a grocery store which was to become a most prosperous business. Later still he acquired the 50-room guest house Cumberland, on the Lorne seashore. When he died, aged 80, in June, 1959, he was a man of considerable wealth.

It is characteristic of both father and son that at no stage of their respective business careers, which developed simultaneously for many years, did either seek the financial help of the other. Each was much too independent minded for that.

When Frank was four years old his father took him to Snubber and water baths in South Melbourne and taught him to dog-paddle by the simple expedient of tying a rope around the boy's middle and dangling him in deep water. Frank so loved the water that he quickly became an excellent swimmer. Within a few years he was racing against, and often beating, boys much bigger and older than himself.

Mr Beaupaire similarly introduced Lily to the water and she, too, showed remarkable natural talent for the art of swimming.

As a pupil at Albert Park State School Frank gave more attention to physical than to academic exercises. His favorite water sport was Australian Rules football in which he was such a good performer that he won representation in a Victoria v. NSW schools' match in Sydney.

In summer he carried his bathing costume in his schoolbag so

last tones, and its summer temperature did not exceed 57 degrees. Consequently Frank could not recover his sharp condition quickly enough to justify himself that he would reach top form in time for the Games.

To speed the process he entered a 15-mile race in the River Thames. The water was icy cold and Beaurepaire, numb and below top condition, was forced to retire after leading the field for six miles.

In spite of this he entered the five-mile championship of England a week later. This was also swum in the Thames. Again lack of condition caused him to pull out after racing well up with the field for more than half way.

In the following week he proved the benefit of these two testing swims when he went to Bradford and won the half-mile championship of England. A few days later he won the 220 yards national championship.

Then came the Games. In his first event, the 400 metres (422 1/2 yards), Frank swam second to Britain's 23-year-old champion, Henry Taylor, in time 5.4 seconds slower than in Beaurepaire's own Australian 445 yards championship. He swam third to Taylor in the 1500 metres and was a member of the Australian team that took third place in the teams' race.

A few days after the Games, J. A. Jarvis, a former champion of England, declared that he believed Beaurepaire a better swimmer than the brilliant Taylor. Taylor scored at this opinion.

To prove himself right Jarvis took Beaurepaire in hand and put him through an intensive training course for a week before Taylor was to defend his one mile English championship. Swimming in open water before 20,000 people at Abbey Park, Leicester, Beaurepaire won the title, with Taylor in third place. A few days later Beaurepaire again beat Taylor, this time in the 445 yards national championship at Weston-super-Mare.

Beaurepaire then went to the Continent where he won the off mile North Sea Championship, a 200 metres international race at Ostend, the Belgian 100 metres and mile championships, and a 500 metres international championship race at Juville-le-Pont.

Australia welcomed Beaurepaire home with a special carnival at the Melbourne City Baths. Frank provided a special treat for all present by winning, from scratch, the 300 yards first-class championship in 3 min 42.8 sec — nearly seven seconds faster than the world record.

Frank, then 18 years old, gladly accepted the offer of a half-scholarship at Wesley College. A number of private citizens subscribed the balance of his college fees.

In that swimming season Beaurepaire won the Victorian 100, 200, 300 and 440 yards championships



The last picture of Sir Frank Beaurepaire, taken in a newspaper office, only four days before he died on May 29, 1956.

and easily took the half-mile event in a Victoria-NSW carnival in Sydney.

Then, in the Australian championships in Melbourne, he equalled the world record (10 min 28.4 sec) to win the 500 yards. He also held his 440 yards title and won the mile championship.

In 1910 Beaurepaire sailed from Australia — this time as a first class passenger — with Mr Collins, to compete in an internationally planned "Intermediate Olympic Games" at Athens. An appeal had raised a substantial sum by public subscription to pay their expenses. After they had sailed, the proposed Games were called off because of a political crisis in Greece. Collins considered the fund organizing committee by cable and obtained its permission to convert the trip into a European tour for Beaurepaire.

This tour was a remarkable triumph. Swimming in England and in many parts of Europe, Beaurepaire started in 41 races over varied distances and won them all. He was in England included these championships: 200 yards (in 39.8 sec), 200 metres, 200 yards, 300 yards, 300 metres, 440 yards, 500 yards and one mile.

In winning the 100 yards invitation scratch race against the world's best sprinters, Beaurepaire swam 59.05 seconds.

The tour, which extended over six months, took heavy toll of Beaurepaire's physical condition. Though beautifully trained in the lozenge of his muscles he was physically and mentally fatigued when he returned to Australia. So it is not surprising that he should then have suffered his first defeat in three years. This was in a three-quarter mile race in the Sydney Domain Baths at a NSW

Victoria carnival. Beaurepaire finished third, 23 yards behind the winner, Billy Longworth, 19-year-old champion of the Rose Bay Club. Cecil Healy filled second place.

In spite of his obvious fatigue from overmuch competitive swimming, Beaurepaire swam soon afterwards at distance of his Australian 440 yards title. In the third lap he collapsed. On doctor's orders he gave up competitive swimming for nearly two years. The penalty for continuing to race, the doctor warned him, probably would be complete physical breakdown.

But he was not to lose contact with his beloved sport. The Victorian Education Department appointed him to its staff as a swimming and physical training instructor at a salary of £3 a week. The NSW Swimming Association then moved to have Beaurepaire declared a professional because of his job. In a letter to the Victorian Association the NSWASA said its members would not compete against Beaurepaire, if and when he returned to competitive swimming, on the ground that competition with a professional would infringe their own amateur status.

Some time later, when Beaurepaire had recovered sufficiently to reenter racing, the referee at a Brighton (Melbourne) carnival disqualified him as he was about to start in a race. The matter eventually was referred to the International Swimming Federation, which declared Beaurepaire a pro and suspended him from competition with amateurs.

The suspension made him ineligible for selection in Australia's team for the 1912 Olympic Games, in Stockholm. For the following eight years Beaurepaire was barred from amateur swimming.

Meanwhile, he began his campaign to encourage a "learn-to-swim" drive throughout Victoria. He travelled to many parts of the State encouraging local municipal bodies to build swimming pools and the Education authorities to introduce swimming tuition in the schools. He gave demonstrations, formed committees and appointed instructors. Thus began the swimming education campaign that is now becoming Australia-wide and saving countless lives.

In 1914 Frank rejected an invitation from the Springfield University, in USA, to take a post as a swimming coach with facilities to study medicine.

When World War I began, in that same year he enlisted in the the AIF and was commissioned, in May, 1915, as a second lieutenant posted to the 2nd Battalion. Just before he was due to go overseas he was stricken with appendicitis. A severe operation left him with complications which caused him to be declared unfit for active service. However, he served in France as a WCA ambulance officer with the AIF.

(Continued on page 54)

OUR ROMAN GODDESS

When Roman girls went rompin' 7

Across the Appian way,

They set a style for beauty

That lasts until today —

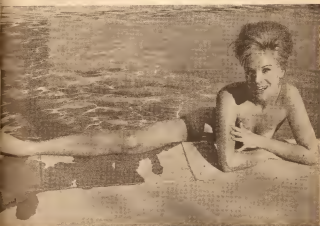
We see it in the shape of chairs,

the pool, the flowered hair —

But best of all, to modern man,

We see it here — not there





apprentice killer

He was thin as a whip and would prove himself just as deadly. He had been taught to handle a gun — and he'd learned his lesson well . . .

HED land 17 survivors of searching heat and swirling dust. He knew the desert as only one born to it can know it. And he knew from the first light of dawn that this day would bring trouble.

For a week there had been an intense chill to the morning air as winter drew closer about them. But this day the air was warm and still, teased as though waiting for the violence that was to follow.

He looked toward the huddled figure of the old man and his gaze traveled by the gray robes of the campfire. The pocket line coiled in a broken loop over the sand. The horses were gone. He sat up quickly and pulled on his boots. They'd been two months rounding up headstubs for a drive south and they'd done pretty well. Now they were headed back with the money seen into the lining of the old man's saddle. Maybe with luck they'd make another drive before the wet set in.

It wasn't easy rounding up wild horses from the rugged northern ranges and breaking them across this flat heaven of hell to reach the stockyards at Bern's Creek — but that was the old man's way of living. The boy refused it was good enough also for him. They'd formed an attachment for each other in the few short months of their acquaintance that was somehow all the more lasting when he considered the reluctance of the old man to take him along in the beginning. Old Pete wasn't a man to grant favors or to ask for them. He was old and it was hard to remember his own youth. He preferred the solitude and the peace of his own company. But despite all that he had taken the horseless youth under his wing. Out of the sweat and the dust and the dangers, they experienced had grown this bond of affection. They had grown to understand each other.

The horses might have been scared off by a growling dog or they might have caught the scent of water in the night air. Or the

mare might have responded to the call of some wild stallion while the gelding followed. He walked by Pete's sleeping figure and inspected the broken line. There were no tracks in the dust and nothing to indicate the course of their flight.

The sense of danger was strong in him — a shadowy premonition that grew out of the shadings of the dawn. He looked back at Pete and considered waking him. Then he changed his mind and moved on. The steel hooves of his gelding and the old man's mare were clearly defined and easy to follow. Maybe he could find them before the old man woke.

He trod away among the clumps of spindly and dry, struggling desert cacti. All the while his eyes scanned the lightning sands around him. Already the day was hot, a full half hour before the sun would lift up from the eastern rim. He knew that unless he found the horses before the day was fully hours old he would not find them at all.

They would be forced to abandon their packs and go on on foot. Tough as Pete was he knew the old man would not last long under such conditions. The desert knew no mercy. It's code was survival of the fittest, and like old Pete it would grant no favors nor ask for one.

The sand gave way to rock — pebbles hard-packed and worn smooth by the friction of wind over countless centuries. There and there he caught the slight grime a shed head made on the stone. He knew then that it was true that provoked the horses over such terrain. He could eliminate all other possibilities now with the certainty that it was a dog in one of them. He knew they would not stop until they had either lost the dogs or been killed by it.

He came upon the carcass of the mare less than an hour after leaving camp. From the way she'd been torn, he knew the dog had abandoned all thought of a second kill and concentrated solely on his feast. Probably the animal

was still near, crouched down and blending his color with the stones, waiting for him to leave. He straightened from the dead mare and searched the wide sweep of country around him. Growing out of the pebble plains was a thicket of thorn and oak about a mile to the south. He knew he would find the gelding there or not at all.

He walked on and the rising heat soaked him with his sweat. He'd have a long trek back if the gelding was trapped or if he failed to find the horse at all. Now and then he paused to look back. Finally he saw the dull outline of the dog snarl forward over the pebbles to the hill. He would have risked a shot had it not been for the fact that if the gelding did shelter among the oaks the sound of the gun might speak it to further flight.

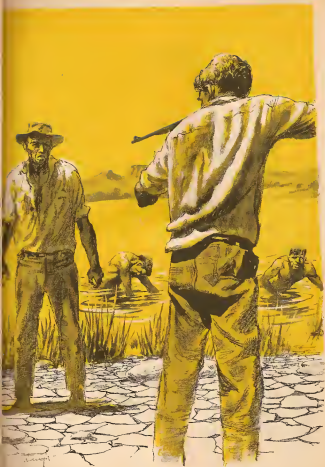
He walked until finally he saw the horse standing tense in the shade. With a quiet soothing murmur to his voice he approached. When the horse had been calmed he mounted and turned it out in a wide circle away from the dead mare and the ravaging dog.

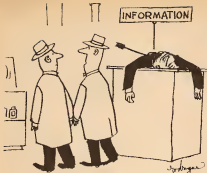
In all its fiery splendor the sun lifted a great ballast to burst the full heat over the barren wastes. The day was born — and the raging premonition of disaster was again with him. This was to be a day unlike any other in all his life.

The ride back started hours. Every yard of each mile the feeling of apprehension grew stronger. He should never have left the old man alone. He should have awakened him and gone in search of the horses together. Perhaps the wild dog was only one of a pack. Perhaps the pack would rush in and tear the old man to pieces.

Even before he came to full sight of the camp he knew there'd been trouble. Then he saw the horses and the three men who stood there while old Pete remained motionless on the ground. His heart slowed almost to a stop as he realized what had happened. The money! They'd robbed the old man and stolen his money!

On a savage impulse he raised his rifle and then reluctantly he let it drop down. They were watching him and they all held guns — ready to blast him to eternity.





"Spareing Goods must be over in this direction."

He turned the getting to a halt and looked down at Pete. The old man's face was ashen but he was conscious and able to sit up. They'd jabbed him in the stomach with the butts of their rifles. He could see the bruises beginning to show where they'd stripped away his shirt. They'd worked hard at finding where Pete carried his money. From the satisfied smiles on their faces he knew they'd got it.

They talked among themselves almost as though he wasn't there, ignoring him because they considered him no threat at all. A man he learned was Colby laughed and another they called Griffith spat into the dust. They were debating whether to kill the old man and boy or leave them as the sun to fry. The third man, Simmons, voted for a bullet. It was quick and it was certain.

And while they argued Pete struggled to his feet and moved forward. "Sahny," he said, "You're a damn young fool. You shoulda stayed and helped me fight . . . instead o' anakin' away like a yellow-bellied coward. What kind o' a lily-livered brat are ya . . . stiches got no guts at all . . ."

The old man's words were like the slash of a knife. He couldn't believe Pete could mean such things. The men stopped arguing and glared at him. They had all figured Pete didn't think much of this kid. Pete said, "All the time peasin' me for money . . . and then not havin' the guts t'help me protect it. You're no better than they are . . . I reckon ya worse because ya never even had spunk enough t'try and steal it. Sure, let 'em kill me if they want. You're their kind. Go with 'em. Go and rob some poor damn middle-classin' old goat like me

who ain't got a chance t'defend himself. Go on. Go with 'em. . ."

He tried to find words to defend himself but the old man's wrath left him speechless. Colby grinned. "Well kid, how about it? You want to stay here and rot with this old desert rat or dya want

to live with real men for a change?"

Pete's eyes burned into him, but not with hate. It was as though his mouth spoke words that his eyes denied. There was a note like desperation in his voice. "Go . . . dya hear? Go with 'em. You ain't no good to me here . . . Go with 'em!"

He looked away from Pete and met Colby's careful scrutiny. The man was like a huge rat, sharp-featured and mean. "You'll learn a few things from us, boy, that you won't never learn with this old goat. Maybe some day you'll even get yourself a notch so that there pea-shooter you carry."

It seemed the old man gave an almost imperceptible nod. Or perhaps it was simply his imagination playing tricks. He wanted to believe there was a reason he couldn't grasp behind Pete's scathing criticism. And then suddenly he understood. As things were they were hopeless against these men. But if they could catch them off guard they stood a chance. If Colby and his cronies took him along he could wait his opportunity and grab the money back. This was what Pete tried as desperately to communicate. Go with them . . . nothing could be done by staying . . . go with them. . .

He slid down from the getting's back and moved to where his saddle lay propped on the sand. Without a word he picked it up. The men Simmons moved forward a bit, observing shrewdly. The idea of a



"I'm just going off duty, Sergeant. I'll bring her in in the morning."

new recruit held little appeal for him. "Kid... if you hate this old goat so much let's see you do something about it."

Johnny hesitated, knowing they watched him. Casually he added the gadding and turned to Pete. The old man stood waiting. There was nothing else to do but hit him. His fist crashed against Pete's chin and he wanted to cry out in protest as the old man fell. Simmons laughed.

He turned away hating them all so much he would willingly have died right there and then rather than go on with it. But he knew the only hope the old man had rested with him. If he went, likely they'd leave the old man alone. Tight lipped he put his foot to the stirrup and lifted himself into the saddle. Pete propped himself on one elbow and wiped the blood from his mouth. They were ready to leave.

The men mounted and swung away from the camp with Colby leading and Griffith close behind. Screaming jagged at the rear as though reluctant to ride off and leave the old man alive. Of these three men the boy recognized Simmons as his greatest threat. The killer urge was strong in him.

It was obvious that though Colby was their leader it was by virtue of his superior strength and not his cunning. One day Simmons would probably try to kill him. The violence and lust of his brain-filled brain was written into every line of his face.

They rode until the heat forced them to halt. There was no shade and no water. They ripped a tar-paulin over spikes and lay exhausted to wait the day out. He could have sold them of the wind because he'd sensed it from the first moments of dawn, but he held quiet and hoped in some way it might help him. They heard it coming but there was little they could do but bolster the hopes and force them down on their knees while they got behind them.

Out of the north the dust came in a spiralling screeching wave. The horses cried in terror and the men cursed. All was a swirling roaring madness with the sand peeping them and driving them down. The world suddenly contracted to a few yards of madness with all the voices of Hell shrieking torment in their ears.

He felt a hand on his arm and he knew it was Colby. And then abruptly the hand was snatched away and he felt Colby's horse struggling to buckle to rise. Through eyes closed with sand he saw Colby striving vainly to drag the animal down instinctively he flung himself forward to help. Between them they quivered the frantic beast and got it down again onto the ground. All the while the wind threatened to snatch them from the face of the earth and hurl them headlong into obscurity.

Then finally it was gone and they were left there, raw and beaten beneath the warring sun.



"Are you SURE this is the way to Logan's Lagoon?"

Colby looked at him and grinned. "You're OK, kid, you know that. You're OK."

He had nothing to say. He was thinking of Pete and wondering how the old man had fared in the wind. Pete knew the desert better than anyone — but he was hurt and he was on foot. He'd sense the coming of the wind but where could he seek protection from it? Johnny thought of the diango and wondered again. They'd taken Pete's gun and left him defenseless. What chance of survival did he have?

He'd worked Johnny's head. He should have let Colby's horse go. Maybe the wind would have extracted vengeance for him. Now they were there again and he was helpless against them.

They saddled the horses and rode on. He guessed where they were heading. The only water hereabouts was at Logan's Lagoon. Whatever their plans the lagoon had to be included. They had no water and few supplies. They had to reach the lagoon or they were finished.

Night came and the air was still and hot. He knew that meant

the wind had not completely gone. It could rush on them almost without any warning, twisting and screaming over the sand like some impossible demon that would swallow them up. He found himself hoping that it would. At least then he would know they died before they could squander the old man's money.

Simmons sat alone and stared sulently at the fire. His thoughts were all of a concentrated hate and a means to acquire it. Colby lay quiet and looked up at the stars. Griffith shuffled over to the boy and sat beside him. "In a little while when we go to sleep you could make a run for it. That is if you had anywhere to run to. The only place you could go is the lagoon and we'd soon catch up with you there. I reckon you're stuck with us, eh... whether you like it or not."

Johnny recognized the harsh truth of the words and nodded. Right now he could only bide his time. Sooner or later the chance would come when he could hit back at them.

(Continued on page 48)



RECRUIT FOR REBELLION

Because he had allowed his passions for the doll-like beauties to betray his sworn duty as a naval officer, 111 innocent men were now marching to certain death.

MISSION John Faulkner, in command of a small navy crew assigned to the 113-man United States Marine detachment, rolled passed eyes upward and glancingly inclined his bowed head toward the rear of the passenger coach in which he was riding. "If ever we have to fire that thing," he told German-Mate First Class Sam Caxton, "it will probably look the truth right off the rails."

Lashed on the roof of the last car in a five-train military caravan was a smoothbore cannon, a hefty 12-pounder dismantled from its cradle on the moon-silver USS Moscow, and stilt with its crew to give the Marines heavy caliber support in their daring mission to rescue the besieged members of the Foreign Legations at the Chinese capital city, Peking. The Moscow skipper had made the assignment almost ceremonial. "No need to remind you how important this gun will be at Peking," he had said. "This is a proud step of great tradition. I want you to get the gun through at all costs. The old Moscow deserves one last shot at the enemy!"

The enemy was a group of Chinese religious fanatics, called the Boxers. Although not officially sanctioned by the Chinese Government, they had vowed to drive all Westerners from the land and purge out the influx of Christianity. The first stamp had been at Peking, where the Legation staffs of the Western powers were trapped, some already dead, and waiting desperately for the relief expedition of which Ensign Faulk-

ner and his crew were a small part. With so many lives depending on them, with the Moscow's tradition to be upheld, Faulkner felt as if he were carrying battle-ship anchors across each shoulder. He glared with annoyance at the fixed manner in which Mate Caxton stared out one dirty window of the car across the great plain of China. "What do you make of that, sir?" Caxton suddenly asked.

Faulkner, a gangling figure in dark blue, sat up and looked through the window next to Caxton's. A quarter mile off the left flank of the train he saw a standing row of Chinese ponies, without riders. The horses' heads drooped, were on their knees with arms raised to the heavens. "Boxers!" Faulkner shouted. "They're praying before attack!"

Their appeals to their God of War quickly failed; the Boxers hopped ponies and charged on waves toward the first train of the caravan. Faulkner heard the shrill blast of train whistles, felt the forward surge of added speed. All along the coach up ahead, Marines cranked down windows and peered out their Krag-Jorgensen rifles. A stiff-backed British lieutenant dashed through the car, calling out: "Prepare for attack! Fire at will!"

The scrappy Marines took over the windows. Rifles began to crack. Ensign Faulkner's small crew was clustered into the wash room. "Get the window down," the ensign said. "Start shooting. I'm going back to check Big Boy."

He yanked open the rear door of the coach and stepped into the

box car behind it. The coach rocked with the small of unbalanced bodies. Tobacco smoke hung motionless in the air. A few Chinese coolies sitting near the door glanced questioning at the Americans, then resumed their jobbing conversation. They looked back again, surprised to see Faulkner's drawn revolver. The ensign snatched a stream of Chinese of them, opened up a passage to the rear. He went out the door on to the train, and climbed hand-over-head up the iron ladder. The windstream blasted his face as he reached the top. He ducked his head for an instant, saw the racing streams of charging Chinese Boxer cavalry and the flash of rifle fire.

Americans and British were riding in the first train. The second contained the entire German contingent, 312 strong. Back of them, in the third train, rode 312 Russians, 54 Japanese, 41 Italians. Those of the 113-man British force not riding in the forward train were aboard the fourth with 197 French soldiers. The fifth train carried supplies, a workgang of coolie laborers, the 12-pounder cannon, Faulkner's gun crew, and a Marine guard company. The attacking force of Boxers, it seemed to the ensign, numbered not more than six or seven hundred.

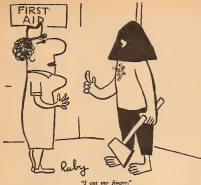
He hauled himself up on to the car top and lurched forward under the wind blast along the two-foot width of outwalk. He could see the 12-pounder's canvas cover following in the breeze, and one of two of its thick hemp cables whipping free. Wondering what was wrong, the ensign dropped to his hands and knees and began to crawl. The riding Boxers had reached the rear car now and were galloping alongside, firing up at him.

He was too open a target. He emptied his revolver furiously, hurried forward and grabbed the top rung of the ladder. Looking down he saw a man stumbling on the platform, reaching for the coupling lever. Faulkner went for his revolver but remembered it was empty. Before he could reload the cable snapped and the lever and the coupling device opened. The rear car with Faulkner on it, was detached from the train.

Momentum carried the longer forward for a hundred yards, but the main section of the train pulled away rapidly. Remembering the gaffer's speech, and the tradition of the Moscow, Faulkner began to shout his Navy Colt. "Don't bother," a voice said in perfect English. "Just drop the gun."

Faulkner carefully spewed the weapon in its holster, then turned around to stare in the wrong end of a pistol held by a slim coolie. The car had stopped. A band of horsemen were jiggling toward it. "Climb down," the coolie said. "Go inside the car."

He descended the ladder as the shouting Boxer cavalrymen came up. The muzzle of the pistol nudged him into the car. Sticks



"I cut my finger."

ed spare rolls and ties took up most of the space. Only a dozen coolies had been permitted around or on top of the equipment. They were all holding guns in their hands. Faulkner's captor removed the wigs, flat cocks hat. Lustrous black hair was bound in a tight bun, dark eyes highlighted the smooth planes of a quiet face, the classic pale gold perfection of female beauty.

"We are all women," she said, waving a hand towards the others. "I am Yehala. We are Marchu women sold to the wackling Emperor, Kuang Hsu, and trained to serve in his harem. Tzu Shan, our leader, promised to free us from the life of concubines if we helped him. It was quite simple to pose as coolies.

"You have a gun," Faulkner said. "You don't need a story. Turn me over to Tzu Shan."

He could hear footfalls on the top of the car, the sound of tools ringing against metal. The woman smiled when he glanced up. "They will take the barrel of the cannon and replace it with a railroad tie, so your superiors will not know the gun is useless."

Faulkner heard the heavy thud of the cannon barrel as it was tossed to the roadside. Boxer soldiers came into the car, and carried out a railroad tie. They paid no attention to him. The design was baffled. "What's the idea?" he said. "Why not chop off my head and go home with it?"

"We will stay here to await the return of the train," Yehala said. "The immortal Tzu Shan will pursue them through the night. They will not come back till dawn. By then you'll be one of us."

"A Boxer? Not?" Faulkner

laughed. He was no barbarian. A recent graduate of the service school, he dressed formally for dinner at the officers' mess, used the proper fork, carried his full-dress uniform with him at all

times, and had once taught Sunday school.

She regarded him with languid humor. "Few Westerners are aware of the real beauty of the Emperor's chosen concubines."

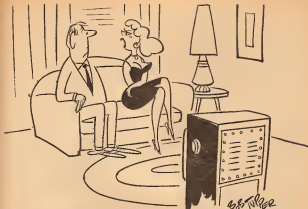
Yehala snapped her fingers. Five of the other women gathered up all the guns and went outside with Yehala. The remaining six solemnly stripped off their coolie garb. The sound of horses and shouting men faded away. Faulkner knew he was alone now with the concubines . . .

When dawn arrived the design had a mild understanding of why the Emperor was considered a wackler. Yehala came into the boxcar. She carried a knee-edged axe and a gleaming dagger. The other concubines swiftly dressed and slipped outside. Yehala began to chant in singing Chinese: "Foreigners being insolent to the gods, and extinguishing society, rendering no obedience to Buddha, enraging Heaven and Earth, eight million Spirit Soldiers will descend from Heaven and sweep the Empire clean of all foreigners. The Buddhist Patriotic League of Boxers, immortal all, will protect the Empire and its people."

She seemed in a trance as she raised the axe and dagger high above her head. Faulkner was stretched out on the floor, Faulkner sat up to watch her, decided to go along with the gag, but wondered why she was doing this. She lowered the axe until it proce-



"I'd slap your face only I deplore physical violence."



"Oh, all right, you can have a kiss during the next commercial. Now be quiet."

ed that against his head, the sharp edge resting on his ear. The dagger was held against his throat.

"Repeat those words with me," she said, and Faulkner, feeling a tingle from the dagger, repeated after her. "This Doctrine is studying the Boker art to save China and destroy its enemies. If cut with knife or chopped with axe, he will feel no pain. Cannon cannot injure, water cannot drown."

The dagger prodded his throat; the axe cut his ear shallowly. Faulkner forced his face to remain expressionless. Yehala smiled down at him. "You are a Spirit Soldier," she said. "You cannot be slain."

Faulkner bowed humbly until his knee touched her toes. "There is still an hour before the train arrives," she said. "Time for further instructions."

She left the car and Faulkner leaned back, a wide grin spreading over his thin face. He dropped the smile into hiding when she reappeared, the ones he had not yet slept with, came into the room and undressed.

An hour later, on schedule, the main section of the train chugged and heaved into sight. The concubines donned corset girds. In a little while Faulkner was flourishing his empty revolver and telling Marine Captain Nelson Rade. "I fought them off, sir."

Rade, bullet head sunk into broad, spauldriated shoulders, chunky face contorted with suspicion, glared up at the canvas-covered mound on the freight car roof. "Is the cannon intact?"

"It's been well taken care of, sir," Faulkner replied.

Rade inspected the coupling, which the Bokers had rigged to appear unoccupied by gunshots. "It can be fixed," Rade said. Gradually, he added, "Well done, Mr. Faulkner."

In 10 minutes the car was re-coupled to the tail-end of the train and the entire caravan was under way again. Yehala touched the muzzle of her gun to Faulkner's neck. "You are one of us, of course," she said. "But since the cannon is so valuable I think it best if a single guard, one of your men, is posted at the car door — where we can shoot him should you violate your oath as a Boker."

The engine obligingly posted Mate Caxton as guard. Away from the 12 concubines, he began to breathe easier. The train moved at a slow pace but in a few hours they would arrive at Langtung, the midway point between Peking and the coast, and Peking. No trouble was anticipated at Langtung. He planned to relieve Caxton, personally, at that time.

The train caravan drew into Langtung that evening. Everyone aboard was dismayed to see that the railroad station had been burned to the ground, the water tanks chopped down and split open. Admiral Sir Edward Seymour, in charge of the expedition, set up guards at every well to preserve water for the engine boilers. The engine hurried back to the rear car to relieve Mate Caxton.

After the mate had gone Yehala fished her gun from her loose jacket and waved it idly at Faulkner. "Ten Shin has done well," she said. "Now that he has burned the station the foreign officers will gather to discuss what is to be done about it. You will be among them. So, strip off your coat and trousers."

Faulkner grinned, still wondering what was up, and stripped his clothes. As he had anticipated, several of the concubines stood up and moved toward him. They were carrying sticks of dynamite in their hands, something he hadn't anticipated. "Of course you secretly laughed at my attempts to seduce you as a Boker," Yehala said. "It was only to let you think you had us fooled, so you would start to enjoy the attention and do nothing about it."

The concubines were binding sticks of explosive to each of his legs, tying another stick to his back. "A very short time for the book stick," Yehala told the girls. She jabbed a small hole in the rear of his trousers, others in the legs of his trousers, then told him to dress. After he had, he could feel them pulling the hairs through the holes. "When you are summoned to the conference," Yehala said, "you will be the last to arrive. I will walk just behind you, a simple corset carrying some naps and papers for his master. Hidden under there will be a dozen sticks of dynamite."

(Continued on page 49)



CULT OF THE SNAKE GOD

I thought I knew Baldretti's face. Yet I couldn't place him at first. Why should I connect the disappearance of a dozen beautiful girls with the fact Baldretti kept pet snakes?

WE pushed through the jungle fringe to the edge of the lake then my guide refused to go a single step further. He was an unknown, transient Ceylonese I had hired in Talpe village after being turned down by a dozen others. He jabbed a sticky forefinger toward the small, jungle-covered island lying close to the shore. The white cupola of a Buddhist dagoba, and the roof of a temple showed between the trees.

"There it is," he grunted. "Snake Island! Very bad place. The many demons live there. You pay. I go." He thrust a dirty hand toward me, palm upturned.

I paid him and he disappeared into the jungle without a backward glance. It was the south-west monsoon season, the sky was overcast, and I felt as if I was being slowly cooked in the steamer heat. As I plodded toward the bamboo bridge that connected the bulky little island to the mainland I wondered if I was not being a little foolhardy.

I had stopped off in Ceylon during the course of a leisurely tour of South-East Asia hoping to find additional background material for my next novel. While doing some research in Colombo I happened across an old copy of the *Times of Ceylon*, which contained a story that had set my inquiring mind on fire.

A European called Baldretti had settled in Ceylon some years previously and had bought Snake Island, situated in a large lake near Ceylon's southern tip. The place had once been a religious center but had acquired the reputation of being demon-haunted. The superstitious locals had abandoned it to the jungle.

Baldretti, who appeared to be a wealthy eccentric, had established himself there with about a dozen servants—all pretty young girls—all Moon maidens.

These Moon maidens were the offspring of English planters and their Ceylonese mistresses. Dur-

ing the British occupation the Moon children were well educated. Some of the boys were sent to England, others were trained to be planters or members of other professions. The girls were usually educated in Christian convents. Some became teachers and others married into the Anglo-Ceylonese set.

When Ceylon gained her independence, life for the Moon children became highly unpleasant. The Europeans whose parents had been legally married, married them. The natives treated them with open contempt. Many of the Moon maidens were forced into prostitution. Others became virtual slaves of the rich men who bought them.

Over the years Baldretti's Moon maidens began to disappear. Rumors of foul play got around and finally the police were compelled to investigate. Baldretti told them that the girls had deserted him for the bright lights of Colombo. But no trace of them was ever found—in Colombo, Snake Island, or anywhere else. The case was dropped. The girls were social outcasts and nobody really cared a damn about them.

The bamboo bridge creaked and swung alarmingly under my 12 stone burden. I made it across and plodded up a track of red clay, sticky from recent rains. The track was hemmed in with arisa palms, fan palms, coconut trees, and indigenous forest plants half-strangled with huge leafed creepers and aerial vines. The track led to the crest of the hill which dominated the island and on which the ruined temple stood. Fallen branches and coconut fronds littered the path.

I stopped on the left of a fallen tree. The other end lifted and a three foot viper wriggled out from under it. I froze, cursing myself for not having a gun, for not even carrying a stick. The mottled reptile slithered away into the snarling bush. I dabbed sweat from my face.

"Did my little friend frighten you?" a deep voice asked.

A strange looking man stared at me from a herd a few yards ahead. He wore a loose white shirt, a sarong and sandals. His black hair was close-cropped and his beard showed beneath the pale, clean-shaven shirt. His eyes were cold and black and glittering—like a snake's. They were so dark that the pupils were invisible, in spite of the heat I shivered.

"You must be Baldretti," I said.

"That is correct. Who are you?"

"Rex Scarie. I'm a writer looking for material for my next book. I heard about the old Buddhist temple here and hoped you would allow me to look it over."

Scarie looked out of his magnetic eyes. "You look more like a prize-fighter than an author."

"Maybe so. I used to be an amateur wrestler, but I've always been a professional writer. Used to be a prize reporter before I turned to books."

That seemed to satisfy him. He nodded curtly. "Very well. You can come along with me."

As we trudged up the hill together I began to wonder where I had seen this man before. I have a good memory for faces and Baldretti's features seemed familiar. Yet I could not place him.

"They say this island is leechy with poisonous snakes," I said cautiously. "Aren't you scared of being bitten?"

"No. I'm not frightened of snakes. It is they who are frightened of me. They know me for their master."

Baldretti's odd words were matched by his tone. I looked at him.

"I see you do not believe me," he said coldly. "Before we visit the temple I must show you something else."

The track led to a small grassy plateau ringed in by trees and occupied by the temple buildings, a cluster of palm-thatched shacks and a white-walled cottage with a wide veranda.

Baldretti took them in, with a lordly sweep of his arm. "The cottage is my home. The other shacks are my servants' quarters. Come along, my friend." He led me into the cool darkness of the cottage. He pushed through a



"Watch it. He may just be playing dead."

head burst into a room leading off the central hall. "Come and see my pets," he cried.

I entered the room and came to a sudden stop, appalled by what I saw. The walls were lined with glass-fronted boxes each of which contained a deadly reptile. There were cobras, king cobras, Russell's vipers, and many others I could not name. In glass-sided tanks filled with sea water swam brown coral snakes and banded sea snakes of brilliant blue and yellow. This man — this madman — slept in a room only a few feet away, separated from potential and agonizing death by a few sheets of fragile glass.

Baldroth smiled at my expression, exposing discolored and rotten teeth. "Beautiful, aren't they not?"

I gulped. "Not my idea of beauty. Did you catch them yourself?"

"Yes," he said proudly. "A fascinating hobby." His strange eyes glowed. "Would you like to see them laid?" It gives me great satisfaction pleasure to feed my lovely pets."

Before I could answer he moved to the far corner of the room and, for the first time, I became aware of the cages that held live rats and Ceylon squirrels.

Mamma threatened to leave me. "No! No thanks," I said quickly. "Snakes give me the creeps. Let's go outside."

"As you wish," he said sulkily. He searched like a small boy denied a special treat.

In the fresh air I felt better. "I'm planning a book dealing with Oriental religions," I lied, "especially Buddhism and the cult of the Vedas. But I suppose religions bore you?"

He brightened at once. "On the contrary, my dear fellow. In point of fact I studied for the priesthood in Rome."

"Really? Then you're Italian?"

"Half Italian, half Irish. But I forget my duties as host. Come and rest on the veranda."

We relaxed in comfortable rattan chairs and Baldroth rang a small silver handbell. A few minutes later a girl appeared.

She wore a light, flowing sari that clung to her slim, full-breasted figure. Her gleaming

black hair was tied in the traditional Ceylonese bun and her creamy skin was several shades lighter than my own. Only the contours of her cheeks and her exquisitely slanting, lily-like eyes betrayed the Oriental strains in her. Moon maidens are listed for their beauty — and she was the loveliest I had seen.

She stood before Baldroth, her eyes downcast. "You rang, master?" I thought I detected a hint of fear in her voice.

"I ring twice," he said softly. "You are becoming lazy. Now, have you forgotten your last lesson so soon?"

Anger and pity rose in me. I opened my mouth in protest — then changed my mind. Baldroth had rung once, not twice. There was a sadistic light in his eyes as he looked at the trembling girl. He enjoyed feeding his rodents to venomous snakes and terrifying helpless girls. But if I am to succeed him now it would run any chance I might have of discovering what had happened to the missing girls.

"I heard the bell ring only once," Nona said. "I came as quickly as I could."

"But not quickly enough," Baldroth snapped. "Now — bring us slither pineapple and coconut juice."

"Yes, master." She turned and glided silently away.

I undressed my fists and tried to make my voice sound friendly. "You were saying that you studied



"I've decided not to marry you, Stanley, but, of course, that's no reason to spoil our honeymoon plans."

for the priesthood. Did you take your orders?"

"Yes. I was a priest for many years near Rome. Then there was a slight misunderstanding with higher authorities. I was defrocked."

His words hit me like a blow. Now I remembered. I remembered Baldrotti's picture in the London dailies several years before. I even recalled the banner headline — "Priest Exposed as Leading Snake Worshipper!"

Baldrotti, or whatever his real name was, had been the high priest of a weird snake worshipping cult with headquarters in Italy. Several children had disappeared from local farmhouses and it was believed they had been kidnapped by the fanatics and used as human sacrifices. But no solid evidence had been produced and the murder charges collapsed.

"Being defrocked must have been a terrible blow to you," I managed to say.

"Not at all," he grinned. "It led me free to go into business for myself — on the black market. I have a flair for organization and within three years I had made enough to retire on."

Norm came back with a tray laden with a jug of coconut fluid, glasses, and plates of pineapple. As she placed the tray on the table she looked toward me and I caught the pleading, urgent look as her lifted grey eyes.

I gave her a barely perceptible nod. She went away on silent, naked feet.

"You may be able to tell me something about the Nagas and the Veddas," I said between mouthfuls of pineapple. "I understand they still practice a debased form of snake and demon worship."

"Those aborigines!" Baldrotti said. "The pure religion of the Snake was only understood by the Ancient Egyptians and some of the Romans." He talked on and on. Once launched on his favorite topic there was no stopping him.

The sun lost some of its fierce heat as it dipped toward the jungle's western rim. In one of the rare pauses in Baldrotti's monologue I got in an important question.

"Could you possibly put me up for the night? It will soon be dark, and I won't be able to find my way back to Talpe through the jungle."

"I don't normally encourage visitors," he said slowly, "but I must confess I find your company stimulating. Besides, you haven't seen the temple yet. Yes, you can stay. I'll tell Norm to make up a bed for you in one of the servant's huts. Most of them are empty. Will that suit you?"

"That will do splendidly," I said with enthusiasm. It was exactly what I wanted.

By 10 o'clock that night the overcast had cleared and the lake shimmered in the silver-blue light of the moon. The wireless night



"Just when I think I've got everything, I see something like that!"

was alive with the croaking of frogs, the whine of insects and occasional cries from the jungle. I stood at the open shutter window of my cottage hut and stared across the compound at the flickering light of an oil lamp that came from Norm's shack. The rest of the huts were dark and empty. Of the 12 Moon mothers Baldrotti had originally owned, only Norm remained. An odd and ominous fact.

The everwatching hut and my jungle hike had fired me, but I was too tired-up for sleep. I caught glimpses of Norm through her open window as she moved about preparing her bed and lowering the mosquito net. Then she stood before the window. Slowly, she took off her sari and draped it over a chair. The dress was followed by her bra and panties.

My heart was thumping as I took in her beauty in a long and greedy stare — her full, firm and pointed breasts, her straight back and flat stomach, the curve of her thighs. She let down her hair and wriggled into a flimsy night

dress. Then she blew out the light.

Twenty minutes later the lights in Baldrotti's cottage were extinguished. I made myself wait another hour — the longest hour I had ever spent — then I crept across to Norm's hut.

The door swung open under my touch. I held my breath. Was she sleeping? Would she scream if I awakened her?

Her voice came softly from the shadowed bed. "Who is that?"

"Hex Scobie."

"I thought you would never come." She lifted the net and came out from under it.

She stood before me in the moonlight, so close that I caught the fragrance of her yassin scented hair and read the troubled look in her long grey eyes.

"What is it?" I said — although I thought I already knew.

She clutched my arm. "Take me away with you. Please! I will serve you faithfully. I will do the housework for your wife and look after your children."

"I'm not married," I said gently.



"She just left here with a lot of dictation and her chair is cold!"

She lowered her eyes. "Then—then I'll be your lover — if you want me. I'll do my best to make you happy."

"You're really desperate, aren't you?"

"Yes. I want got away. I'm frightened of Baldroth. Terribly frightened."

"You're scared you might disappear like the other girls?"

She shivered as if she had been stung. "Yes," she whispered. "How did you know about them? Are you a policeman?"

"No. I read about the disappearances in an old newspaper. That's why I'm here, to try and find out what happened to those girls. I want you to tell me everything you can about them."

She was silent for some moments, then she began in a low, tremulous voice. "They were all Moon raiders, like myself. When I came here there were five of them, all pretty girls. They used to sleep with Baldroth in turn, although they all hated and feared him."

"Why didn't they run away? Why haven't you run away?"

She twisted her fingers together. "They had nowhere to run to. They had no proper — no legal parents to protect them. Their guardians were so poor that they sold them to syndicates calling themselves 'servant agencies'. These agencies sold them to Baldroth as slaves and concubines — for a very high price. Legally, they were Baldroth's property. If they had tried to run away he would have found them, brought them back and punished them. He had when he told the police they had run off to Colombo. I feel sure they never left this island."

I stared at her. "How can you be so sure?"

"Because I tried to escape once myself. But there is no escape for a Moon maiden in Ceylon. I hadn't got very far when Baldroth found me and had me brought back. Then he beat me almost to death."

She turned round, pulled the nightdress over her head and hung

it on the chair. "Look!" she said savagely.

My breath caught in my throat as I saw the lush marks that crisscrossed her shapely back. Some of the wounds had healed but others were still fresh.

"My God!" My voice sounded like a stranger's. "The swine! He's whipped you many times."

"Yes."

I baited my fists. I had to help her. But to do that I would have to take her away from Ceylon. I was due to leave for Hong Kong very shortly, but how could I take Noma? Money was no problem, but the legalities were. You can't travel with a woman unless she is your wife or daughter. Then I took another look at her lacerated back, and that decided me.

"Come, Noma. I'll take you with me. First to Hong Kong and then home to Australia—to hail with the compensation."

She swung round and I had a brief vision of female tenderness before she came into my arms. She pressed herself hard against me and her arms wound round my neck. She pulled my head down and our lips met in a long, fierce kiss. Baldroth took hold of me and all awareness of our surroundings faded. I was only conscious of Noma's fiery kiss and her eager, straining body.

Something cold and slimy brushed the nape of my neck.

I let go of her and swung round, heart pounding and muscles taut.

Baldroth stood less than a yard away, his black eyes wide and glaring. In his hands he held a live cobra, fingers gripping it just behind the head so that it could not bite.

"If you try to attack me, Snake," he said, "you die."

My glance shifted from the quivering obscenity to the face of the madman holding it. His strange eyes seemed to glow with an unholy, inner light. I tried to force my eyes away from his — and failed.

"You have earned," he intoned slowly. "You have come here to spy on me and repay my hospitality with deceit. You have offended Pristia, the Snake God, with your impious ways. As High Priest of Pristia, it is my duty to mete out due punishment."

His deep voice drained on. The moonlit room grew dim. My strength drained away. There were only Baldroth's great luminous eyes and his commanding voice. "Come with me . . . come with me . . . come with me."

Then total blackness came down.

I was standing in a pit. A concrete pit about 30 feet long and 12 across. Therein, stuck in wall brackets high above my head, gave a reddish, flickering light. The light swung back from a hideous, mottled image facing me at the far end of the pit. It stood about eight feet high. It had a man's body and a python's head. The head was snake, showing tooth-filled jaws.

Fear grew in me as I examined the prison. The concrete walls were over 12 feet high, gleaming white and quite unclimbable. But it must have ordered me, some hypnosis, to descend a ladder — and then withdrawn the ladder. A deep, malicious chuckle came from the shadows above.

Baldroth leaned down at me. "You fool, Scorb! You dared to touch your shipmates' wine with your face. You wish to find out what became of my missing slaves. Well, you will soon find out."

"Where's Mom?" I shouted. "What have you done to her?"

He went away without bothering to reply. Soon the scent of burning disease reached me. Baldroth began to chant in Latin.

I listened carefully. Two decades had passed since I learned Latin at college, but since then I had acquired reasonable fluency in Spanish and Italian and these languages had helped me to remember a lot of Latin. Many of Baldroth's phrases were unrecognizable — just exotic gibberish, but I soon got the main drift. My blood turned to ice water.

I was to be sacrificed to Prietas, the Snake God.

After a while the chanting ceased. Baldroth appeared at the edge of the pit carrying a long bamboo pole. Three times he struck the metal idol on the head. The idol was hollow, for it boomed like a gong — like a gong of doom.

The echoes, dead and after echoes settled round me like a shroud — an oppressive, choking silence. For the first time I realized that I



"I think . . . therefore I am!"

could no longer hear the normal night noises of the jungle. It was if I were already standing in my buried vault.

My mouth and lips were dry. Nervously, I flexed my muscles. Whatever lay ahead, I wished it to come soon. Nothing could be worse than this waiting — this fear of the unknown.

I heard the thudding of my heart, and then another sound — a slight metallic creaking, as if the idol were coming to life.

It was coming to life. I hinked in disbelief. It rocked slightly

heavy on its base. And then it grew a second head!

The searching head of a real python appeared between the gaping metal jaws. The creature's hypnotically piercing eyes fixed on me. The forked tongue flickered in and out between small, rotten teeth.

The devil-spoke slithered out of its sleeping place, yards and yards of it. The big, snake-shaped head reared up from the concrete floor. As it glided toward me the sweat incense spread was overcome by its foul, sickening odor.

I swallowed hard. It was a monster, all of 30 feet. But I'd be damned if I'd die like a terrified animal. During my wrestling career I'd come up against a lot of very tough customers — but never one like this.

When the light shone right in the creature's eyes, I sprang. My fingers hooked just behind the scaly head and I squeezed with all my strength.

The python convulsed into a mass of whipping coils. I let the floor with a spine-jarring crash, but still retained my grip. The brute pulled me over and over, but still I held the lethal head away, still I tried to strangle.

A mass of cold steel looped round my lower legs and began to squeeze. A second coil whiplashed around my thighs. The great snake heaved. It began to work its tail toward the idol.

If I got a purchase with its tail I was dead. With a supreme effort, I wrestled it away. But I was wrong. Rold on my back screamed. Rold on.

The constrictor flung a coil about my shoulders and started so much pressure that I gasped. Desperate, I gave the new strength. Somehow I broke free, but the additional effort left me panting and much weaker.



"Dorothy has had it. He thinks she's wearing a mask."

(Continued on page 48)

Law of Hellfire Range

Up the long trail the vanquished Sam Quinby rode back to Arapahoe . . . only to find he couldn't live down his post — except by dying!

FICTION • GEORGE C. APPELL

THIS town he was approaching. This town of Arapahoe that was a grey jumble of buildings in the heat of early summer, wouldn't hold much threat to Sam Quinby because the name he was riding under was not known here. Perhaps he wouldn't be warmly welcomed, but he wouldn't be mistreated either. Unless he slipped.

Worn down to 150 pounds by four years of war, he rode not with the triumphant assurance of the victor but with the cautious vigilance of the vanquished. It was a vigilance that he had learned dearly, in a crucible of smoke and flame, and one which he would never relax again, ever.

And so he rode, a narrow-backed young man with old eyes, astride a trail-worn horse heading for Arapahoe under a name of his own devising: choosung. Mordary, he'd decided to call himself.

He hoped he wouldn't slip.

The warm drowse of the day had its enervating effect on him — Mississippi-born and now to this western part of the nation that had just conquered his South.

Or thought it had conquered his South, for already the rumors of more violence to come were running across the land with the winds. It was spoken through the hills that Jefferson Davis was organizing the Confederacy again, this time in Alabama, and that he would roll the place up and be damned with the paperwork of Appomattox. It was whispered that agents of the rebel South were already at work obtaining funds by force from the riches of the West.

And here in Arapahoe, those whispers were directed at the high and narrow shoulders of rebekilled Sam Quinby himself, so that he was continually hawking, as he rode into the street, to sleep at ease, hostile eyes like his had didn't show it, he'd bought that before he crossed the Missouri River — and his shirt didn't show it, either, he'd packed that up from the wreckage of a wagon that had long since been abandoned. But his trousers did — reserves and patched and ragged as they were,

they showed the cut and color of the Confederacy to a discerning eye. And something else showed it, too — the hard lines around his mouth, where the flesh was charmed in eternal white grooves. Battle grooves, born of fear and nourished on determination.

Arapahoe was smaller than he'd expected, though no different from a score of towns he'd ridden through on the long, long road from the east. It was a rutted street fronted on each side by rickety buildings, a stage station that gave promise of occasional contact with the outer world, a few shabby stores, a lifeless hotel and a saloon.

Sam chose the saloon. It was pleasantly cool, after the furnace-like heat of the prairie, and it smelled of stale beer, stale tobacco and stink clothing.

A bald-headed man with suspicious eyes stood immobile behind the bar.

"Yes?"

"Barley an' water, please."

"That'll be 10 cents." The man waited until he saw Sam's money before he set out the drink. "Riding through?"

Sam started to say, "No," but held it back as he noted that all talk had stopped. Some silent men at the rear tables were waiting for his answer too. So he said, "I haven't decided yet."

What he wanted to say was, How do you get to the Broken Key ranch from here? But for some unaccountable reason he didn't dare, even though the Broken Key was his own property. A letter dated March 11, 1865 — last March — had apprised him of that. His uncle, his mother's only brother, had left it to him, Uncle Royce, of the Lockery strain. A big, bumpy man who'd supplied the Confederacy with horses. So Sam told the bald man behind the bar, "Thought I might find work with Royce Lockery."

The barman stared at him. Then a bearded man at one of the back tables and, evsily and slowly, "Lockery's dead of the fever."

Sam faced around, pretending great surprise.

"When'd that happen?"

"Three-four months ago." The bearded man, was wearing a starch hat and a leather vest. "You know him?"

"I— Sam faced around to the barman — "heard of him." He lifted his drink.

The barman said, "He left the Broken Key to a nephew, name of Quinby."

"What's ranner' the spread now?"

The barman waited for several moments before he said, "Dave Briggs." Then he said, "And he don't take to strangers."

An uneasy cough sounded from the rear. A host scraped nervously. The bearded man said, "I veady. The bearded man knew this Quinby? He was with the 19th Missusie, according to the lawyer — You look like you'd served with the 9th."

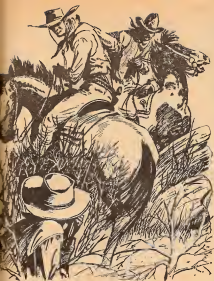
Quickly Sam said, "My ranner's Mordary." He finished his drink and added, "I was with the 9th Texas." He waited, braced for trouble, but still it didn't come. The reputation of Sam Quinby, he realized, was already bad. It wasn't because the Broken Key was reportedly the base of operations from which the wagon trains were being routed for their mine assays, which were then sent down to Alabama for the Cause. He'd heard those things more and more frequently as he adventured west, and now that he was as far west as he wanted to be, all he was getting was suspicious questioning.

The doors flung open and a short, stocky man with blond mustache walked in and nodded to those at the rear tables. There were no answering nods. He leaned on the bar, ordered sour mash and appraised Sam with a glance.

"Ten cents," the barman said.

The talk at the tables was still dead. And then the bearded man rose and started toward the bar, his swinging slowly backward and forward, low down and eyes raised. Sam thought, here comes trouble.

The stocky youngster with the blond mustache paid for his drink but did not lift it. He was



watching Sam and, beyond him, the bearded man's approach. He asked Sam pleasantly: "Now here?"

"Yeh. Lookin' for work. Name's Medary."

"Mine's Trask." He nodded toward the bearded man. "As' you der you'd see Mistah Quarles, the local peace officer." Trask added under his breath, "Careful, Medary."

Quarles was standing next to Sam now. His black eyes were lustrous and his knuckles were gleaming white. There was no badge on his leather vest, but he wore a heavy gun strapped low on his hip.

"Medary, huh?" Quarles asked. "I don't suppose you know Dave Drings, any bettin' you know Sam Quashy?"

"Drings?" Sam's heart was pumping loudly through his ears.

"The foreman at the Broken Key."

"Oh." Sam glanced at Trask for a hint of help. "No, I don't know him." He didn't either. Suddenly he asked, "Do you?"

Harsh laughter sounded from the tables, and the barman smiled

behind his hand. Then Trask swayed his sour mash, cracked the glass down on the bar and said, "Leave him alone, Quarles."

Quarles glared at Trask.

"Keep out of this, Lardbelly. Why hell, if you'd give some of that hot fat of yours to Jaffie Dave, he'd probably live longer than he would on raw gold."

Mere laughter sounded — nervous laughter, with no gusto in it. Trask stepped toward Quarles but Sam got between them, facing Quarles. The laughter stopped as abruptly as it had begun.

"Cook your temper somewhere else, Quarles. For a peace officer, you got a mighty low basin' point."

Quarles studied him for a moment. There was no hatred in him, only anger.

He was confronted in Arapahoe with a situation that he didn't know how to control — the Broken Key raids — so he blustered, he challenged, he dared, in the hope of getting his hands on something concrete, on something hard, ruinous.

Sam could not dissuade the men. In fact, while returning his stare

he found respect for his courage and sympathy for his besetlement. But Quarles would have had no use for those emotions, even if he had recognized them. He said, "If you're learning up with Trask in any way, I'll know about it." His hand fell to his holster. "And when I know about it, I'll break up the partnership."

"Partnership in what?"

Quarles took a deep breath. In spotting away trails for Dave Drings.

That was so much for Trask. His shoulder dropped and his hand blurred to his gun and he would have whipped it out if Sam hadn't grabbed his wrist and wrenched it down and around, leaving him helpless. Then he let Trask go and turned on Quarles, who had his gun out and leveled.

"Put it back, Quarles."

Quarles hesitated. He wasn't a coward and he wasn't a fool, but standing there with a gun on two men whose heads were empty made him feel foolish. So he holstered.

"You've been warned, so—"

A rider slashed past the rocks outside and jumped down and dung himself through the doors shouting violently for Quarles. Then he saw him and pointed behind him with nervous jerks of his arm.

The Margaret Mine wagons just got jumped an' burned south o' here! Whoever does it got away with a hundred sacks of tin-smelted—

But Quarles was running through the doors and the men at the tables were hurrying after him and the barman was gasping, "Lord o' Godden!" and Trask was nudging Sam and saying, "Come on, Medary, let's watch 'em go."

The street was empty except for high-flying dust that was swirling from the heads of a dozen horses that even now were galloping south.

"Maybe," Sam said, "we better go watch 'em."

"Listen, Medary, you're a Southern like me. They'd never libert anything we tried to do, or tried to tell 'em we did. As' I work for the Broken Key, which makes it worse."

Sam turned full on him, face alight with surprise.

"The Broken Key? Why, lead me to it, man."

"You sure you want to go? It's not the most pleasant place in the world since Royce Lockery died."

Sam threw off the better lurch and stepped into his saddle.

"This town'll be somewhat less pleasant than the Broken Key, once that peace gets back. Lead on, man!"

Dave Drings was thick-set, bow-legged and ham-handed. Arrogant black mustaches accentuated the high arch of his nose. He gave Sam no welcome, no invitation to sit. He merely intoned while Trask explained what had happened in Arapahoe. Outside, a couple of riders were leading a yearling toward the pens. A Chin-



"What are you, man or woman?"

one cook was cautiously reaching up a chicken. But those were the only signs of life that Sam saw.

Dave Drings considered what Trask had told him. He glanced angrily at Sam, almost accusingly, as if in that glance he could drink through whatever deception might be in him.

"Medary?" Drings' eye wandered to Trask, and something passed between them, some glint of approval. Finally Drings nodded and said, "You're on at 30 a month, Medary — 'til the new owner gets here, at least."

"When does the new owner get here?"

Drings shrugged irritably.

"He was last heard of at the Army. Name's Quilty, nephew of the late owner." He added with some bitterness, "Major Samuel Quilty, 34th Mississippi." And he spat.

"You don't seem to like him much."

The foreman frowned blackly.

"Why should I, when he'll come walkin' out here full of wrong ideas about how to run a ranch? Why should I, when I've got the place payin' all by myself?"

"By yourself? Or for yourself?" Sam wanted a showdown now, before the rest of the riders returned from southwest. He was convinced that that's where they were, having seen the spot where the Marietta train had been hit.

Trask said, "Come on, Medary, I'll show you the bunk."

"Wait a minute." Drings stalked forward. "What did you just say?"

Sam grinned coldly.

"I said that maybe you had this place payin' for you, not by you. It looks awfully prosperous for a spread that's just wintered-up an' hasn't had time yet to brand or ship. It looks mighty clean, with only two pokes an' a cook to police it."

Drings reached smoothly and

sniffed for Sam's neckerchief knot and held it.

"I don't answer questions here, I ask 'em." He shook the neckerchief once. "Come to think of it, I'll save the new owner the trouble, and fire you right now." He shook the neckerchief again and sold through the side bath to Trask. "You got hoodwinked. This man's no cowpoke, he's probably a sheriff."

Sam broke free and took a long step backward.

"Why should that worry you, Drings?" He was still grinning, though there was no humor in him.

Drings's anger broke and he sideways a flat into Trask's mouth and lugged at Sam and hatched him across the jaw and slammed him against the door and hit him brutally in the lower stomach. Trask came at him from behind but Drings whirled and jabbed up a knee to break Trask's coming and sent him spinning into a table. Sam shoved himself away from the door and drove a right back into Drings's ribs, crossed with a left and slamed him twice across the cheeks. Drings charged him and they locked grips for 30 seconds grappled each other, flinging themselves in a mad dance



"See, I think I'll take the dog for a walk."

that had no rhythm, no pattern. These Drings were almost loose and clawed for his gun and that's when Sam connected with a swift right hook to the jaw that led the man flat on the seat of his pants with his eyes rolling white and his fingers twitching numbly.

"I hereby give notice," Sam Quimby growled. "Trank, you count!"

Trank disengaged himself from the wreckage of the table.

"Hecsen! I better. I figure we got five minutes, maybe less, to seek the results of free movement, as Job Stuart used to say."

They catapulted the semi-conscious Drings and hit their saddles, spurred across the arena and out through the gates and away toward the northern hills. On the first upgrade they stopped to blow their horns and listen for the signals of pursuit.

Trank rubbed his mouth tenderly and winced.

"That's one I owe him—Hecsen!" Hecse was drumming the hard-wood wall behind them, coming louder.

"Trank, there's three of 'em anyway. What d'you propose?"

"Arrrrrrh." Trank blew out his breath and shook his head. "We're at our rope's end anyway, Med'ry, so there's no use runnin' any more."

But Sam didn't think so. "We're near it, not at it. I propose we let 'em chase us away. What's the old sayin'?" He who runs to fight again—"Somethin' like that—Let's run to fight again!"

They spurred up to the higher bench and galloped across a flat, gray stretch and passed on up into the first timber, behind and below them, Drings and two riders appeared on the bench. Three gray shells of white smoke spurred and faded — the bullets stopped short. Trank fired and missed.

Then they were riding upward again, seeking deeper timber. The day was getting old and trees were turning from green to purple. Once, Drings shortened the distance at a creaky gallop on his peach-colored pony and fired four times and then circled back into the lower woods. Another time, Sam and Trank lagged well less than a hundred yards separated them from the pursuit, when each fired and one of the riders veiled and rose in his saddle and then sagged over the pommel, hanging on to it. His horse nose-bopped and threw him, and Sam and Trank whirled away through the timber and were gone.

It was twilight in the valleys thought not yet on the slopes when they passed to rest their horses again, and to Hecsen. But the pursuit had ended, and the dring day was quiet.

Trank nodded happily.

"With a wounded man to pack, they figured to turn back, and damned glad of it I'll bet."

Suddenly he yanked on his bridle and turned, staring below into a wooded vale where half a



"No, I ain't never went to no stupid college."

down, canvas-topped wagons had been drawn into a quick defensive circle.

"Med'ry, there's the reason Drings didn't want to come any further!" He pointed. "He didn't want to speak his next target, 'til he had enough strength to hit it."

Sam eyed him curiously.

"You know a lot about Drings, don't you?"

Trank looked away. His horse, swishing its tail, suddenly turned, came together and backed against Sam's animal, bumping it aside.

A powdered man wearing a blue kept and jackboots rose from some bushes and threw a Spencer on them.

"Well, boys," he twanged, "just where you don't up here all alone on the hot end of gunfire?"

Sam thrust his life around and squatted through the dark.

"We got shot off the Broken Key, that's what."

"Fred is right." The man held the Spencer higher. "The Broken Key?" He grimaced with distaste.

"I didn't know they fired men with Southern accents. You better come down an' explain—Get on an' walk, I'll be right behind you."

One by one, figures began to crowd from the wagons. The first were men with rifles — the last were females — two of them. The largest had gray hair tucked beneath a bonnet, a stern mouth and an understanding eye—the smallest had dark hair and lots of it, a smooth skin and sparkling blue eyes.

The man with the kept lowered his Spencer and beckoned to a burly man wearing side-whiskers and a black coat.

"Peter, I flushed these two on the bench yonder. They say they just got kicked off the Broken Key."

Peter Mcswervy examined Sam and Trank with great care.

"Where'd you come from?"

"We just told your outpost here," Sam went on. "Now would as if we're captives. Let me ask a question — where'd you come from?"

The bonneted woman made clicking noises and clinked back into her wagon. The younger woman, the pretty one, continued to stare at Sam.

"We're from California," Peter Mcswervy said firmly. "We teamed up two days ago with the Santa Maria Mining wagons, here. We're leaving them at the town of Arapahoe, where we hope to settle." He cleared his throat. "That satisfy you?"

Sam, nodding, dragged his eyes from the pretty girl.

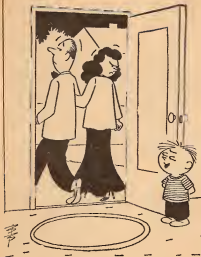
"They're Devere agents, Peter. That's my guess."

The girl folded her arms across her breast and eyed Sam boldly. "You'd think that talked reason the war is over, and that they'd stop all this shooting and robbing — intelligent talk, that is."

Sam winked at her, but before she could say anything her mother called her into the wagon. Her father, Peter Mcswervy, tapped at his side-whiskers and cleared his throat again.

"We have no evidence against them, we'll have to let them go. But mind you — don't get caught skulking!"

The man with the Spencer cocked it, and Trank made a move for his own gun. But Sam pulled him toward their horses.



"I'm warning you, she hasn't eaten a thing all day!"

"Odds're too high. Let's pull fast."

They tumbled off into the deepening dusk, pointing toward town. Trask stayed mad for a mile, then began to settle.

"It does seem kinda crazy, kesser' the war goes on as' on, with all this country to build up."

"Yeh," Sam Quinby agreed, "it sure does." They rode in gully silence for another mile, when Sam asked, "You were with Joe Stuart?"

"Until Richmond, I got hit with a Marie ball at Yellow Tavern, the reason Joe was killed, an' I never did go back — war does strange things to folks, don't it?"

"Yeh." Another mile, and the stars were low and bright and bright. "Like snakes' 'em support a new one — sounds crazy." Sam swallowed uneasily. That girl back there had had an uncommon effect on him.

"Crazy for sure, tries to continue fightin'." Trask was ob-

viously impressed with this rich land, with its warm fellowman and fertile promise. When the lights of Arapahoe were in the distance, he asked, "You ain't go to meet that girl in town?"

Sam was shocked.

"I'm aimin' for a stock an' ordnance! I've been on Army rations for so long that I can't remember what good food tastes like."

"Where, sub," Trask inquired, "did you say you served?"

"With the 18th Mississippi— Come on, let's get that stock."

But they didn't get it. All they got in Arapahoe was a grumpy greeting from men with hostile eyes — men who had just packed the charred boxes of the Marietta wagon train drivers into town. The torpedoes buried sacks were on the plankwalk in front of the stage station.

Quarles carried a lamp from the saloon and held it high over the heads of Sam Quinby and Trask.

"Broken Key riders, returning

to check up on the results, eh?" Without turning he called, "Pike! Grease up a rope and grease a tree! We'll hold a court in the bar room."

The man called Pike spun out a plate and shook it a few times, then coiled it in. Others crowded the two accused men from the rear and hazed them into the saloon.

Trask had a chance to murmur, "Mudry, maybe we should've ambushed Drings, after all."

"Maybe we still can," Sam leaned backward against the bar, elbows on the wood, legs crossed. The ring of faces confronting him in the smoky lamplight was like a giant jury from hell. The man Pike was seated in a corner, greasing his nails.

Quarles thrust his way through the crowd and spoke the indictment with a few short words as to how Trask had been suspect since he'd begun riding for the Broken Key the week before, and how he'd continued to meet Mudry, here, on the very day of the Marietta raid, those two taking care to be seen in town at the time of the raid.

"But," Quarles added, "they planned it for Drings."

Sam held up a finger, schoolboy-fashion.

"Can the accused speak?"

"Briefly," Quarles ordered distastefully.

"Well then, there's a pretty story, but you can't prove it. It so happens that Trask an' me just got run off the Broken Key by Dave Drings, for askin' too many questions. Your proof, Muz Quarles, lies with Drings, not with us." A rough murmur of agreement answered that — but the man Pike continued to grease his nails. Sam considered tipping his head at the way and ducking himself as owner of the Broken Key, but quickly rejected it. The nephew of the man who had sold horses to the old Confederacy would automatically be condemned of furthering the fortunes of the rebel Confederacy.

Quarles looked at the faces for support.

"If we want Drings again, all we'll get is the same old lullaby. I say, let's string those two now as an example to all the others."

Sam Quinby played his last card on a long chance.

"If you want to visit Drings, you'll find him at dawn in a wide 12 miles north of here, fair to jump a wagon train that's headed for the night." It got the surprise that he wanted. "It's a Santa Maria Mine train, bound just here for the river, and some Confederates are with it. If they ever reach here, they'll settle here."

Even Trask was startled to hear that. Quarles stashed his jury again, and he knew that he'd lost. The men wanted to ride. But still Quarles delayed with, "There's no proof of what Mudry says. He's probably decoying us into the hills so Drings can hit somewhere else."

And Sam got angry. "At the risk of my life?" Is Deings worth that to me?" He pushed with his elbows and confronted Quarles. "If your peed has with Deings, so does mine!"

The jury was for it. Men were already sliding out to the rocks to take their horses. Quarles suddenly whipped out his gun and held it on Sam.

"You'll ride in front with me, all the way." He waved the mangle toward Trank. "And you'll ride beside him, all the way."

Trank stared accusingly at Sam and in his expression was written, *Now look what you've done . . .*

Sam muttered, "You know more about Deings' habits than I do." He was indifferent to the accusation, he had more reason for returning to that wagon train than he had for staying in town.

As they filed out of town into the darkness, Pike kept flicking the end of his pipe at the prisoners, as if to get accustomed to the feel of their skins. He kept doing that until Quarles, early of mood, commanded him to stop it. The rest of the posse was strong and belted him, their horses howling and straining on the steeper grades, heads sticking and pelvis whispering.

Sometime after midnight they came to the place where the man with the Spenser had thrown down on them. Below in the vale, weak moonlight showed the wagon loads as grey blobs.

"Well," Quarles whispered, "where's Deings?"

"He'll be here before dawn."



"For goodness sake, say 'What!'"

And Sam added silently, *I hope Pike's thoughts went to the dark-haired girl who undoubtedly was sound asleep in a wagon bed, wrapped in a dream fabric of a new horse this side of the mountains. He wondered if she had thought of him at all.*

Objects were becoming dustier now. Tree holes shone with the dawn dampness — hawks glimmered broadly. Quarles' features crooked from the propinquity — nose,

beard and shoulder, cut there like stone. Then a rasping "That!" sprang from the further trees. Every man braced himself, knees straight down along ditches, guns out.

There was movement to the south, in the direction of the Broken Key. Men were leading horses on foot, then stopping and sniffling — then mounting at a whispered order.

Dave Deings was a squat lump on his peach-colored range pony. His underparts were rowdy-sharp. "Pick off the guards first, then the others . . . Stampede the remnants."

Ed, you and Oatstro and Max cut in and among the bullock . . . Get the women if you can. They make good hostages . . . All art!"

They started forward, horses' heads held high on buttoned bridles because of the steep slope of the valley. Sam was suddenly aware that Quarles was watching him, and waiting for him to open the bell. So he filled his lungs and let go with the Rebel yell — "Hi-yi-yi-yi-yi!" and plunged out of the trees and crashed through the underbrush into flank of the wild. Trank was beside him, bounding and twisting and trying to find a clear target. Guns bared through the dawnlight and the wild buckled, broke and collapsed back into itself. Bullets whizzed skimmingly close and a horse went down, thrashing, and a man shrieked wildly and there were more dashes, yellow stains of flame sparkling back and forth.

There were no battle lines, only a word jumble of pursuing figures and churning heads and colliding horses, only the deafening blunts of gunfire that showed across the dying dawn.

And quite suddenly, with the suddenness of a cut-off nightmare it was over.

Sam found Dave Deings lying blue-faced and quiet in the trampled



"Okay Matthews, take over!"

(Continued from page 48)



THANKS

"Young man, I think it only proper that I inquire as to your intentions!"

dirt, his glazed eyes not seeing the coming day. There were others — Ed and Max, Quincey and — and one named Uterhoe, who'd been handy with the torch.

"And that," Quincey tutored triumphantly, "just about finishes the Broken Key."

Frank knelt to Uterhoe and spoke urgently to him, even as the man was dying, and when he rose he appeared satisfied, though he combled in no one at the moment.

"They'd have caught us sleeping for sure! Glad you came back," he said to Sam Quincey, and thrust out his hand.

"Mod'ry, I was thinkin' of re-turbin' to Alabama — huh? Oh, I thought you knew." He fished out a worn old wallet. "Mistah Jeff Davis himself desired me to find out why Dringus wasn't sendin' his stuff down to Montgomery, an' I just found out why. He was stakin' it away to the hills for himself, an' Uterhoe told me where. That's why Quincey could never catch him with it along the river."

Frank took his officially sealed papers from the wallet and, after a long and appreciative look around the land, tore them into bits. "I don't think I'll go back to Alabama, though, 'cause Jeff won't get away with it twice, so I reckon I'll stay here — how 'bout you, Mod'ry?" Then his eyes twinkled and he asked, "Or should I say Quincey?"

"When I mentioned the 18th Mississippi last night, I figured you'd guess, but I still couldn't be sure about you."

"I couldn't be sure about you, either. When a man looks at a ranch, there's no tellin' what he'll do."

"No, there isn't," Sam swallowed and cleared his throat. "Mist' Davis desired me, in turn, to look into the matter of the Santa Maria

train, an' I guess I followed his orders, though for the last time, I got a hunch he won't need me any longer. I'll need a foreman, Frank, if you're interested."

"What you want for — steak an' onions?"

"No — for that girl." And Sam Quincey, ex-USA, broke into a ran.

When it did they wouldn't mock him — they'd double up like the crows over they were and run.

Morning came and the waddy-waddies agreed to help. They headed on wearily, trying to cover as much ground as possible before the last forced sleep to halt. As he rode Johnny studied each man for some sign of weakness. But though the men sopped them with sweat and throat burned cruelly in their throats there was not one of the three who faltered. They knew the lagoon lay ahead of them — they knew that once they reached it they were safe. Had their way been unobscured, he could have beaten them. As it was he knew he had no alternative but to continue.

They reached the lagoon long after sunset of that same day. They lay on the bare ground and slept till dawn — then they were on their feet again, walking up the camp. Finally when it was done, they rested — all except Griffin who went off with a gun to hunt wild ducks. Now that they had water there was the problem of food. To exist in such a wilderness there were always problems, but there was ample game around the lagoon.

Simmons spread his lean form out bodily to sleep. Oakley walked over to the boy and sat down.



"If the pain comes back, cry!"

"Kid," he said, "I never thanked you properly for what you done. Helped me with that horse saved my life. It wasn't accidental either one of the others would've done . . . They'd have let me smother and been damn glad of the chance to get their hands on all this dough."

He shrunk from the friendly clasp of Colby's hand upon his shoulder — and Colby laughed because he knew what he was thinking. "We didn't murder the old man, boy. We gave him a fair chance if he keeps on bawling the way he was gone he'll be all right. But if he gets any ideas about trying to follow us, the doc's'll finish him for sure. Now you can see I'm a reasonable man. . . why not forget all these crazy notions about grabbing that money back. I know that's what you planned but it ain't no use. There's three of us and only one of you. You ain't got a chance."

Johnny nodded and managed somehow to grin. Colby laughed and slapped him roughly on the back. The man was anxious to be friendly. So anxious it seemed he was almost desperate, as though he felt he needed at least a friendly smile against the brooding Simmons. They walked back to camp. Simmons was awake and waiting for them. There was no need for words — all the hate in the man was plain in his eyes. Soon now there would be trouble between them. When it came one of them would die.

Johnny glanced at Colby and thought of his strange outlook concerning murder. He had no questions about killing. Murder to Colby rated chiefly as a means of self-protection. To Simmons it was simply a means to an end.

Griffith returned without having managed to shoot any ducks and Colby promised that in a little while he would go and take the boy with him. They'd bring back a meal without any trouble. They breakfasted then and Colby took out the money and began to count it. It was the first time since they'd robbed the old man that they'd showed any interest in it at all. Until now they'd been more concerned with flight. Colby counted out the money and divided it three ways. All the while his eyes watched the boy as though they were saying, "Now if you want to get it back you'll have to kill all three of us. You see how impossible it is. You see . . ."

Deliberately Johnny turned away and pretended indifference. Dividing the money made his task that much more difficult but it would not stop him. Every moment of every hour he spent with them he would be teased and waiting for an opportunity to get it back. They thought because he was a boy and they were men they could outmatch him — but they underestimated him. He could match their cunning — and he could wait. Sooner or later there must come one unguarded moment that he could grasp. Then they



"I think I'm going to like it here."



would know the true fury of this revolt. When it was too late they'd realize just how deadly a boy like this could be.

They took their share of Pete's money and Colby picked up a rifle and handed it to him. "We'll get some ducks," he said, "And I'll give you a lesson in how to shoot."

They walked away from camp and circled the far side of the lagoon. Ducks grew thick along its edge and crowded the gray water that was now dark with flocks of wild duck. A shot-gun would have scored them a dozen or more, but the forever moving birds were no easy target for a rifle.

Colby motioned him to take aim. He turned the butt firmly against his shoulder and squirmed through the sights. "You hold your breath," Colby said, "and aim low at the water line. Then you squeeze the trigger. Gently. Don't pull it. . . just squeeze it until you take up all but the last fraction of pressure. Then, when you're set . . . you shoot."

The gun banged and the ducks

rose in a fluttering whirling cloud. Colby's rifle crashed beside him and a bird tumbled down. They waited and the ducks wheeled back. He pulled hard on the trigger and knew he'd missed. Colby laughed. "Well anyway, we got two . . . now all we have to do is swim in and get 'em out."

They were dressing before Colby bothered to speak again. He'd been quiet as though there was something on his mind and he was not certain how to express it. "Kid," he said, "you've got to remember that a gun is for killing. When you've got it in your hands and you point it . . . then you're damn 'fraid. A gun ain't no toy . . . and don't you ever forget that."

By midday the heat had clamped down like an iron band, squeezing out every ounce of moisture from their bodies and leaving them dilled and seared beneath the scant shade of the oaks. Griffith was irritable and Simmons was sulky. Time and again Simmons tried to involve Colby in argument. When this failed he threw aside all remaining discre-



"Hello, darling! Won't all you hear what happened to ME tonight?"

him and challenged him to fight. But Colby smiled a tight smile and ignored him.

Simmons cursed in an ugly way and strode away to the water. They watched him as he hung his clothes aside and began to swim. Griffith glanced from Colby to the boy and then went to join him. Colby gave a deep sigh that seemed to sever all bond that had been between them. He was alone now with just this kid. He didn't need them anymore. The boy waited, aware that the moment was finally near. There was discussion between them. Soon this would resolve itself in violence.

Colby spoke first. "Boy, I reckon you can see which way the wind blows? And I reckon you also want that money real bad, eh? Enough 't'help me get it? Enough 't'bare it two ways?"

Johnny nodded, swallowing because the moment had come and he was suddenly solemnly agreed. Colby continued to his rifle and he picked it up. He was remembering Colby's advice on

guns. He knew what he had to do. He walked down to the water with the weapon held firm and then he called to the two men to turn. They faced him — and the fear in him was like a knife twisting in his belly. He knew Colby was behind him searching their pockets and their clothes. He waited for the word that would tell him the money was there.

For timeless moments Simmons stood still as a rock, eyeing him with savagery as he realized what was happening. Then completely unwary of the gun he charged. The rifle bounced and Simmons fell down to clutch his shattered leg. Griffith acted almost on the same instant by throwing himself forward on the mud and then rolling to fling his arms about the boy's legs. The rifle crashed a second time and Griffith let go.

He backed away and they sat there growling. Simmons was his broken leg aching on the mud and Griffith, with his punctured belly.

Colby came up behind him grinning as he flourished the bundles

of money. And then suddenly Johnny's face changed to searing, burning pain.

They'd beaten a defenseless old man and left him to die. They were criminals not worthy of life. Simmons who respected the authority of Colby, Griffith who listened to the one he thought must inevitably win. And Colby with his philosophy on killing, who thought it was no crime to steal away months of an old man's work and then to leave that man defenseless and at the mercy of the desert.

They had taught him a lesson on the ways of men that he would never forget. They deserved nothing better than to die and not beneath the same sun that blessed the old man's bones. Deliberately he raised the rifle until the sights were leveled squarely on Colby's middle. Squares slowly. He thought, squares until you take up the last ounce of pressure. He saw Colby's eyes widen and the money tumble from his fingers to the mud. And his finger tightened on the trigger until his knuckles whitened.

"Johnny!" the voice boomed out at him, urgent and commanding. It was unbelievable but it was true, the old man came out from behind the tent and stood there. He had beaten the desert after all.

The moment caught Johnny off guard. There was a blur of movement as Colby made a dive for his own gun. He swung back and of its own accord the rifle crashed. Colby twisted up and fell. There was an ugly spreading stain on his chest. His eyes began to glaze and his mouth began to slacken. More than ever he looked like a giant rat, only now more than ever he was a man.

"Kid," he said, "you dare like I told you. A gun is for killing. . . you don't treat it like no toy. You point it at a man and you mean it. I reckon I taught you that much, eh?"

Johnny nodded, emptied of all his hate and aware of the finality of what he'd done. Pete came forward and silently gathered up the notes. When they'd filled their canteens with water and helped themselves to supplies they could leave Griffith and Simmons could stay where they were — they wouldn't get far. And though they each carried a bullet they were still getting it a lot easier than what they'd given the old man.

Pete said, "I figure if we hurry we will might have time for another round-up in rain ranges before the wet sets in."

Johnny turned away from Colby's corpse and nodded slowly. He wanted to get back in the saddle again, wanted to feel the horse pounding under him as he charged headlong down a rugged ridge, the wind and the dust flinging mud wildly into his face. The crack of stockwhips sounding like gunshots above the thunder of a hundred hooves. He'd learned all he cared to know about murder. It wasn't pretty.

CULT OF THE SNAKE GOD

(Continued from page 28)

The nightmare struggle seemed to go on and on, but I never let up on my stranghold. My legs were held in those crushing bonds, but that did not worry me overmuch. I figured my legs could withstand pressure fairly well. The big thing was to prevent those deadly coils from constricting my chest and stomach.

My strength was ebbing — that. Then two metal bands snarped round my back and stomach and began to constrict. My ribs felt as if they were clamped between the jaws of a huge, roaring closing vice. The stomach pains gnarled up into my throat and the heaving heaving fluid made me want to vomit. Warm sticky mass dropped down my chin. My nose was bleeding.

The remorseless pressure increased and millions of red spots exploded before my eyes. My fingers were locked with strength. All feeling had gone from my arms. Raw bands of agony were locked round my body. I could no longer move. I couldn't even groan. I was dead.

The world became brilliant red — and I knew I was on the point of passing out for ever. I bit deeply into the slimy, repulsive thing that was killing me. I felt it give.

The coils about me slackened. With joy beyond description I realized that the python was exhausted.

A professional snake-handler I had once interviewed had told me that the big constrictors tired easily. He was more or less right — thank God!

I must have wriggled free from the breathing coils because the next thing I remember was lying several feet away from the python. Bakdrotti leaped with rage at the edge of the pit, screaming obscenities at me.

He aimed a blow at my head with the bamboo pole. I rolled away and it caught me a stinging crack on the shoulder. Red rage flooded through me. When he swung the pole again, I was ready. I dodged the blow, grabbed the handle and yanked. Caught off-balance, he came crashing down. His head struck the concrete and he lay motionless. Out cold.

I lay where I was with some of my strength returned. The python was beginning to stir. It was time to get out. I angled the pole against a corner of the pit and swarmed up it. It was a rough struggle, but I made it. I lay at the edge of the pit sucking fresh air into my lungs.

Norm came out of the shadows and went down on her knees beside me. In the ruddy glare of the torches she looked like a jungle cat. Her startling eyes were

narrow and cold with hatred. She spat in my face.

"You pig! You killed him. You don't know what he meant to me!"

Her hand flashed from behind her back. I rolled as the knife came at my throat. The blade hit into my shoulder. I sawing a hard right and caught her behind the ear. She went down without a sound.

The wound was deep and bleeding profusely. Artery severed, I guessed. I tore off my shirt sleeve and made a bandage which I tied with fingers and teeth. I rolled toward a flight of stone steps that led upwards to an unlocked door. The door opened into the ruined Buddhist temple.

I stayed long enough to search Bakdrotti's cottage and find a bottle of brandy which I uncorked with my teeth. The beautiful I imbued made me splutter — and gave me five years of extra life.

Now I made it across the bamboo bridge and back to Talpe village along two miles of jungle track. I'll never know. But I did it. I gave me time to figure out Norm's hostile attitude.

It seemed likely that she had been a decent girl before Bakdrotti had enslaved her. But his evil personality and sadistic treatment had finally contaminated her. She had become a rascal, actually.

enjoying the hostages that he wanted out to let. That was why she had never run away from him. She may even have witnessed the deaths of the other girls, her rivals for Bakdrotti's favor, even as she had undoubtedly seen my own struggle with the python. She had enticed me to her but on Bakdrotti's instructions in order to find out what I knew, in order to do as cover if I was a police spy.

When I staggered into Talpe Police Station and roused the sleeping sergeant he was anything but friendly. It took him a little time to understand that I was neither a dangerous rascal or a troublesome drunk. But finally, he saw the light and they put some stitches in my shoulder. Then they rang for the Inspector.

It was late the following day when we reached Snake Island. The python, bloodied and ugly, was sleeping in the pit. One of Bakdrotti's sandals lay nearby.

There was no sign of Norm. She may have gone down into the pit to help Bakdrotti and also been devoured — or she may have fled into the jungle. In any event she had vanished just as completely as the other girls.

It sometimes seems to me that it was all just a very bad dream — that it never really happened. Then I look at the scar on my left shoulder — and I know that it damn well did. *



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MURDER COMES EASY

(Continued from page 18)

To the Medical Examiner, the old saw that dead men don't tell tales is strictly nonsense. As this trial again and again, dead men certainly do tell tales — if you have a medico on the job who knows how to read corpses.

But these medical detectives don't only uncover murder. Frequently, just the reverse happens, and it's the accused killer who has reason to thank the Medical Examiner.

One of the strangest cases of this type on record also happened in Brooklyn. One cold winter morning some years ago a cop noticed a man throw a bundle into the choppy waters of the East River and take off at a run. Suspicious, the cop chased and caught the man, who broke down and began to cry.

"I killed my girl friend," Frank Troita, a longshoreman, sobbed. "These were her arms I tossed in the drink. The rest of her body's in my kitchen."

Detectives rushed to Troita's apartment and found the torso of a woman propped up in a corner. On the floor nearby was her severed head.

"We were drinking a lot last night and we had a fight," Troita said. "I don't remember how I killed her, but when I woke up I seen she was dead. I must have strangled her. I got goosed and started hacking her up."

Troita was charged with murder. It seemed to be an open and shut case.

But at the morgue the Medical Examiner came up with another story. The woman had not been strangled. Analysis of the vital organs showed that she had taken a considerable quantity of alcohol before death, as Troita had said. But it also showed that instead of the normal one percent of carbon monoxide in her lungs and blood the woman had close to 40 percent, well over the fatal dosage.

Police made a return visit to the death scene and came up with a true picture of what had happened. Drunk, Troita and his girl

friend had fallen asleep. As they slept, carbon monoxide seeped out from a faulty stove connection, killing the woman. Troita woke early, as he usually did. Deafened by the gas, he staggered to a window and threw it open. After clearing his lungs and his head Troita found his girl dead. Assuming he had killed her during their quarrel, he made a clumsy effort to get rid of the body.

The murder charges against the man who truly believed he was a killer were dropped, and he was spared a trip to Sing Sing's death house.

The Medical Examiner's findings are important not only in murder cases, however. Even where there is no question of foul play an autopsy can be vital in settling insurance claims. Every one of us who drives a car, for example, has a lot to be thankful for when there's an ME around to reveal whether a man who slips from the curb and gets killed by the vehicle was sober or starting drunk. In New York, it happens about once a day. And the Medical Examiner could mean the difference between losing your livelihood and getting the rest of your life in back, or letting the insurance company settle for a few hundred bucks.

The question of whether a man has died by his own hand, from disease or a heart attack, or through an accident, may involve large sums of money for survivors. Especially where there is an insurance policy paying double indemnity for accidental death, or nothing in case of suicide.

Take, for example, the case of Albert Edwards. A retired manufacturer who had a severe heart ailment, Edwards owned a \$25,000 dollars life insurance policy with a double indemnity accidental death clause. On a spring morning a couple of years ago Edwards was puffing around in the garden of his home in Richmond, Virginia, when he suddenly shouted to his wife for help.

Mrs. Edwards dashed out the kitchen door just in time to see her husband clutch his chest, collapse and die.

On the surface, his death was obviously the result of his bad heart.

But because there was no doctor in attendance when Edwards died, a routine autopsy was ordered by the State Medical Examiner. In the morgue, the pathologist assigned to conduct the post mortem noticed a tiny red dot on Edwards' neck. When he checked closer, the doctor discovered the end of a bee's stinger. Through lab tests using the dead man's blood, the pathologist determined that Edwards had been highly allergic to bee venom and had died as a result of the sting. Edwards' heart attack turned out to be an accidental death, and the insurance company paid his widow \$50,000 dollars.

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Ed. LeCote

"It isn't that I don't like you, Goddard, it's just that we live in two different worlds."

face a trumped-up murder charge just because you're having a fling with the police. Raymond told, at least, he on the first boat out of here."

"The first boat leaves tonight, from Shark Lagoon," Jackson reminded him drily.

"Yes, quite — and I'm not going to be ungrateful... Shall we say two years' salary — in lieu of notice?"

"Cash?"

Hilton handed him a heavy envelope.

"There's £2000 sterling here. You can trust me to send you the rest when you've settled."

"I know I can. Well, I'd better get out of here before your two extra gardeners wake up from their little rest."

"Be careful," said Hilton.

Half-an-hour later Jackson again abandoned Koro's motorbike on the side of the road. This time he was just within sight of Shark Lagoon. He walked quietly through the tall palms at the edge

of the beach. Sure enough, two policemen were waiting close by his doggy. There were no other small boats along the shore for his was the only yacht moored in this deep, ill-served lagoon.

Jackson crept closer to the police. They were both big men and sitting nearly 10 feet apart. It would be foolish to try and take both of them. He faded back into the palms and eyed the distance from the cordoned beach out to his yacht. He considered, too, the distance between the police around to the old jetty where Koro and Stefanie should soon appear.

It would be OK, he decided, if it turned out good. And the sharks? He remembered how everyone had thought Koro and he were mad even to swim in the lagoon wearing underwater diving gear and armed with powerful spear guns. That was in daylight.

Now it was night and he didn't even have a knife with him. He shivered and looked again at the tumble-down jetty across the other side of the dark waters. He

stuffed Hilton's envelope inside his shirt and halfway under his belt. Slowly he walked down across the beach and entered the lagoon without so much as a single splash or noise.

The water was quite cold but Jackson wasn't aware of any physical discomfort. He tried to concentrate on swimming without breaking the surface with arms or legs. With his head near at water-level, the yacht seemed much further away. Was that a jet? Desperately he fought back the flooding memories of the huge, sleek, grey animals they had seen in these waters.

He conjured up Stefanie's face. She was smiling her special smile for him. The smile that bided just before her fingers looked at the back of his neck and she whispered "Mike" with lips almost touching his cheek and ear. He held the image in his mind for as long as he could. When it faded from the cold, black reality of the lagoon, his boat seemed a little closer.

He longed to flail out with a racing stroke but he knew that his splashes would be sure to attract the big sea-eaters. With dreadful slowness he edged closer to the yacht. Now he was almost up to the sleek white hull.

Something moved in the water just a few feet from him. In a blind panic Jackson lunged the last few yards and clawed his way over the stern of the boat. As he lay struggling for breath, his eyes suddenly picked out black-toothed legs standing over him. He started to look up but one of the boats layed forward and his head collapsed in pain.

"Welcome aboard, Jackson." It was Herant.

Jackson dragged himself to his knees. Now he was looking down the barrel of a revolver. After a while the pain in his head eased enough for him to speak. "You'll never see that Bourrel thing on me, Herant!"

"No," returned the Frenchman smoothly. "It didn't take me long to discover that you had an alibi. However, Bourrel had served no purpose. For some reason, Hilton has decided to protect someone. He wasn't really driving the car himself, was he? No matter. You were to be the scapegoat — and after the help of our radio-controlled patrol-cars will make sure Michel le Directeur is not disappointed."

"Come off it, Herant. You can't even arrest me. You admit that I've got dozens of witnesses to prove I was nowhere near Bourrel."

"Yes, but officially I don't know that yet." Herant's throat clicked and his lips twisted in a silent parody of laughter. "Then he shouted to the shore, 'Chevalier! Le Blanc! Voeux a la fortune!'"

In the height of the pale moon Jackson saw two figures climb into his dinghy and start rowing for the yacht.

"You know, Jackson," said Herant in a quiet, almost friendly

time, "I felt sure you would find some way to reach this boat but I do assure you I myself wouldn't swim this lagoon. Not for a dozen Stades's and every son in Marshall Hilton's moneybags. A pity such a brave man should be shot — about resisting a mistaken arrest for a crime he didn't commit. Paris will be quite annoyed with me!"

Jackson went cold. He glanced at the approaching dinghy. Herant caught the slight movement. "Whoo-o-o-o!" he explained. "My loyal sergeants Chevaille and Le Blanc will testify how you suddenly died at me and the gun went off as we struggled. A most regrettable affair."

Jackson had been weighing up his chances in making just such a dive. They were large. Maybe, just maybe, he could hurt himself overboard without being shot. Then of Herant's subsequent shots missed him and the police in the dinghy didn't catch him and the sharks — Jackson's mind goggled on the thought of making the sharks again.

His mind was still frozen when he saw an ear send Herant flying across the cockpit. Without thinking, he flung himself at the Frenchman's gun-arm. Herant recovered himself before Jackson could wrench the revolver away and he slithered his knee up into the Italian officer's groin. Scrambled with pain, Jackson still managed to hold Herant's wrist. Now Herant was pulling frantically at the gun, aiming it over the side of the boat, but, even as he squeezed the trigger, Jackson thrust their locked arms into the air and the bullet screamed harmlessly up into the tropic night.

Then Koro was in the cockpit and another blow from his ear sent Herant over the side. Still gripping the gun, Jackson nearly went into the lagoon, too, but the big Eurasian pulled him back. Jackson peered in amazement at his friend Koro glanced.

"I'd just fixed up Chevaille and Le Blanc when Herant called — so we came out. Too bad for Herant!"

Herant! Overboard and unconscious — but even as Jackson looked over the side there was a flicker of movement just below the surface of the lagoon. Without a sound Herant disappeared. For a moment they stood watching the water in daylight the blood would have shown bright red. Now there was just a slight clouding in the lagoon, like the passage of some watery ghost.

Jackson felt hands on the back of his neck. Soft lips brushed his cheek and he heard Stades's voice saying, "Koro knows the way out of this lagoon even better than you. Come below and rest."

He slipped his arm round her smooth, warm shoulders. "Sure," he said quietly. "Who wants to hang around here saying goodbye to the sharks?"

They went below.

RECRUIT FOR REBELLION

(Continued from page 22)

Yohala poked up a package covered with maps and the and the engine started forward along the tracks toward the first train where Admiral Seymour had set up his headquarters. Mate Coston spotted the engine and ran over. "Sir," he said, "some of the ties were burned and the rails buckled. It will take a few hours to repair."

"All right, mate," Faulkner said, with understanding. "You can rummage around for spools — but be careful."

He walked on a few paces. Yohala clutched behind him. "Too noisy what that means," he said to her. "The work crews will enter the rear car to get rails and ties. They'll find you and your friends."

"They are prepared to die for England," she said. "Like myself!"

Faulkner felt his knees trembling now. Would he call out — would he have the courage to stick to his duty — or would he let her get away with this bold murder plan to save his own hide? He was trying to work up a quarter-plan when the anti-backed British detachment approached him. "Here comes your order to report," Yohala whispered.

"Faulkner, sir?" the British officer said a moment later. "We've got urgent duty for you — immediately."

The engine signaled "Yes, sir." The British officer glanced briefly at Yohala, dismissed her as an ignorant exotic, and continued. The Langkang station master had rung the first train as it came in and reported that the damage had been inflicted by both Dutch guerrillas and Imperial Chinese troops.

"If he's not lying," the officer said, "it means we are at war with China, in which case we'll be forced to withdraw. The bridge at Yonaguni must be kept open for such a retreat. Captain Rade, his men, and your gun crew are being sent back in a special train to build it."

"Our cannon isn't too mobile, sir," Major Faulkner said, thinking of the canvas-covered railroad tie on top of the freight car.

Captain Rade strode up alongside the engine. "The car with the cannon will go with us," he said crisply. "Without that field gun we'd never be able to hold the bridgehead if attacked in force."

"Of course, sir," Faulkner said. "All right if I take a dozen cookies with me to help set up the gun emplacement when we get there?"

Recovering approved, the engine headed back to the last train, followed by the casually straggling Yohala. He found the train already being broken up. Five freight cars were being coupled to an engine, and Yohala's catamaran "rebel" was struggling to help untied rails with the rest of the regular work gang. The engine poked them out, as though by chance, and ordered them free the freight

car carrying his cannon. He hoped to get the girls away from the officers they wanted to kill, without Captain Rade finding out how he'd been fooled.

"Take the men into the rear car with the Marines," he ordered. Mate Coston "I'll watch things in the freight carrying the cookies."

Without intricate switching systems available, the engineers had to settle for the awkward arrangement of moving the locomotive at the end reversed to push the five cars ahead of it. Within an hour they were headed back to the bridge at Yonaguni. Yohala turned up helpless rage as the train carried her away from the officers she had hoped to destroy. She kept looking her pistol at Faulkner, with rising anger.

"Look at it that way," he said. "I got you catamaran out of there before you were discovered. I couldn't see you shot down — or maybe worse."

Yohala became so incensed she

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"You must never put your paw out through the bars . . . you might get bitten."

girth who held the blindfold cloth. Two bandoliers of ammunition crossed the biggest chest the man had ever seen. An English Enfield rifle was slung on a leather strap over his muscular shoulder. The Boxer stripped off his boots and stood beside Faulkner. He towered almost seven feet in height.

He pulled a long, curved blade from his waist scabb, waved it high above his head, and bowed gracefully. "I am The Shan," he said in flowing English.

Faulkner eyed the gleaming edge of the blade anxiously. He was not to jump from the horse and run, two hands and all, when the Chinese woman, Yehala, walked from a small hut and approached him. "The immortal Shan is my betrothed as I have told him," she said smiling, "every thing."

The jealous Boxer shouted: "Shu! Shu! Kill! Kill!" and lunged at Faulkner.

The Boxer leaped above him. The blade, dripping blood, swung high. "Kill me," Faulkner shouted in Chinese. "and my countrymen will hunt you down — hang you from the nearest tree!"

The Boxer's face calmed. "I cannot be killed," he said. "The Boxer gods protect me." He reversed the scimitar, dropped it handle first to Faulkner. "Stay me," he said. "Run me through. I will rise up and seek revenge."

The man hefted the scimitar, saw other armed Boxers crouching around him in a circle. He bowed the sword down, knowing he'd be slashed to ribbons if he took a swipe at Shan. The guard grinned at him. "You dare not kill me. You fear the Boxer gods."

Faulkner shook his head. "I obey the Boxer gods as Buddha wills. Yehala has made me a Spirit Soldier."

Shan glanced sharply at the slim Chinese woman. "This is so?"

"He took the vow, but with a smirk in his heart," she said. "He does not believe."

Faulkner lifted his hands to the sky. "Kannon cannot ignore," he yelled. "Water cannot drown."

Shan showed reluctance to slaughter a man who chanted the sacred words of Buddha. He was confused, but not hesitant. "We shall take him to the cannon, to the water. We shall test his faith."

Shan stopped back, shrilled a command. Armed boxers streamed onto the village street from side roads and alleys, jostling the onlookers, filling every square inch of space. Shan led a pony to the center, swung onto his own horse. In a moment they were riding east. Yehala, between them, toward the banks of the Pei Ho River. At mid-afternoon, Shan's army troop swooped down unexpectedly on a small riverside village. People screamed and ran at sight of them. Inside five minutes the streets were deserted. Shan rode his horse to the edge of the river, to a point where a dozen river junks were moored, rocking gently in the rippling tide.

"Here is water," Shan said to Faulkner. "And cannon — your own — ahead out of these junks. Come, Spirit Soldier."

Faulkner dismounted, prodded along by several husky escorts. He followed Shan and Yehala out along a creaky pier, down a rope ladder onto the antiseptic deck of a flimsy junk with a patchwork sail. In the bow, mounted on a grade carriage, was the 12-pounder from the Monksong. There was a crate of camembells, obviously stolen, and two bags of powder. Neither the crate nor the bags had been opened. The Boxers, Faulkner realized, had not yet testified their cannon in the new mounting.

Yehala and Shan stepped aside and spoke in low tones. Faulkner could not overhear. In a moment he observed Boxer soldiers prying open the crate and one bag of powder. Yehala and Shan walked over to him. Yehala wore the smile of a wronged woman about to set things straight. She clined the rope binding the cannon's bands.

"You can swim, Spirit Soldier," she said. "We will follow in the junk and test you under cannon fire." Grief came sharpened her voice. "Fear not — the Boxer gods will protect you."

The near shore was lined with Boxers just waiting for him to try an escape in that direction. The far bank was empty. Faulkner stroked toward it, rapidly. He was at the mid-stream point when the junk came around. He could make out figures working over the 12-pounder, and began to take aim.

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ive action, a strong dive took him deep underwater. He reversed direction and surfaced, out of breath, 20 feet from his last position.

The junk was less than 200 feet away, coming dead at him. He saw the muzzle flash of the Mow-say cannon, and plunged under again. The hull raised. He floated as he saw its dark shape searing through the water off to his left. He surfaced rapidly, coming up closer to the junk than before.

He waved merrily at Yehala and Shan and yelled, "Cannon cannot injure!" But he wasn't certain they heard. He stroked straight toward the bow of the junk, leaped up from the water, chest exposed, making a challenging target for the gunners. His message got across. If they continued to fire on him, they would sink the boat.

Faulkner turned his dive to coincide with the red flash of flame from the 12-pounder. This time he heard and felt the tank slide through the water nearby. When he surfaced he saw that the new record, added to the dangerous rocking caused by the first shot, had the junk in desperate trouble.

They had stopped water astern, the gunners had quit the cannon to bail out. The junk was riding dangerously low. Faulkner swam again at Yehala, saw the enraged girl and huge Shan rush to take over the operation of the 12-pounder. He didn't bother to dive. The junk was rocking so severely now that an accurate shot was impossible. He treaded water, watched the cannon explode a third shot — this one slasting down just in front of the junk as the bow dipped sharply. The cannon record drove the ship deep astern. Great quantities of river spilled over the sides, and the water-logged craft began to founder.

Seichory leaped footfirst, or dived into the water. Shan came over the side, clutching Yehala in one powerful arm. Faulkner wiped away his gun, breathed deeply, swam desperately toward the girl and her protector. When he reached them, Shan had the situation under control and was making slowly toward the village side of the river. Faulkner went underwater and launched a submerged tackle at the giant Boxer's kicking legs.

He got his arms around the ponderous limbs, took a mule-like kick as Shan struggled above. He got the legs together again, and hung on for all he was worth. With his leg action stopped cold, Shan lost buoyancy and sank under the surface with his shingly burden. One striking arm wasn't enough to keep two people afloat. The boxer released Yehala, who headed upward with the humble dexterity of a mermaid. Shan perched down through the misty water, drew a shimmering blade from his waistband, fought to rid himself of the tentacle-like arms trapping him.

Faulkner stopped fighting. His dead weight fell full upon Shan

In thatashing instant Shan instinctively sought to prevent Faulkner from sinking away from him. He released his hold on the limbs, lost it in the depths, and sprang at Faulkner's other foot. He was totally unprepared for the stranger's sudden return to life. His feet kicked out furiously, breaking Shan's grip. One heel cracked Shan's jaw sharply and Faulkner was free, pumping for the surface, lungs bursting.

He broke out of water to find the junk up-ended, slowly slipping to its death in the river, carrying the time-honored Mow-say cannon with it. Several other junks had put out from the shore in rescue attempts. One of these, with Yehala leaning over its side, bore down rapidly on the stricken.

The women was watching the water near Faulkner, waiting for Shan to surface. Faulkner himself, after gasping in breath, made a shallow dive in search of the giant Boxer. He saw nothing. He came up, rolled onto his back to float. He waited for Shan, like Yehala was waiting. Like all the Boxers on shore or in junks were waiting, but with a different prayer.

The water remained smooth, unbroken. There were no bubbles, no dark, cigarette head popped into the clear. Shan, and some underwater current which had swept away his huge corpse, had dramatically exposed the false claim of the Boxer gods — "water cannot drown."

Faulkner shimmered up a rope to the deck of the junk Yehala was on. The Chinese beauty, wet silk garments clinging to the sleek curves of her body, gazed impressively at the stricken "The gods have chosen to protect you," she said harshly "I am your survival."

Three days and three nights were spent with Yehala before the Pei Ho's sluggish currents floated them down to Yangtsun. Ensign Faulkner found the mean expedition under command of Admiral Seymour working at the demolished bridge, dug in for a valiant last stand. Guns were turned on the approaching junks but Faulkner stood up in front, waving his navy shirt. Cheers echoed over the water as the Marston and other troops of the expedition recognized him. Equipment and wounded were quickly transferred to the junks, and the troops were abandoned. Columns of Western soldiers followed the small boats downstream, marching swiftly along the river bank.

Seymour's stragglers never reached the safety of Nantun. Nor did they relieve the siege at Peking. But they came upon an unknown arsenal at Hsien, captured it, and were thus able to keep the Pei Ho River open so that a second relief force, 10 times Admiral Seymour's expedition in number, could be landed and dispatched overland to Peking. On August 14, 1900, this second force rescued the besieged members of the foreign legations and chased the Chinese troops far into the hinterlands.



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Ernest Joffre Paulaner revolved no heroic decoration for his daring mission. Not even the Congressional Medal of Honor could have matched the satisfaction of reporting to the *Moctezuma* skipper that the gunboat's land-transported cannon had fired the most telling shots against the enemy and won the rescue operation's most important naval engagement. In gratitude, the skipper allowed the captain to keep with him a personal servant, a somewhat bedevilled Chinese—small even for a boy—who attended the young officer with constant devotion, and answered to the unlikely name of Tschala. ■

HE DARED A SHARK — AND BUILT A FORTUNE

(Continued from page 10)

After the war, Frank resigned his swimming instructor's job and became an insurance salesman. He then obtained reinstatement as an amateur swimmer and, in February, 1923, made a spectacular comeback by defeating Norman Ross, the American world champion, in the Victorian half-mile championship.

He continued to win State, interstate and Australian titles, apparently with no loss of the brilliant form he had shown in his year of Europe 10 years before. That he forced his way into the Australian team for the 1928 Olympic Games, at Antwerp.

At the Games he swam third in the 1500 metres final, raised a place in the 500 metres final and was in the Australian team placed second in the 800 metres race.

It is strange indeed that this wonderfully accomplished swim-

mer talked so with a gold medal at either of these Olympics — particularly in view of his subsequent defeat of Henry Taylor, his conqueror in two events at the 1908 Games.

The honor was to escape him again when he became a three-Olympic representative at the 1934 Games in Paris. Boursenaire, then 33, was third in the 1500 metres final, which "Boy" Charlton won in world record time, and was one of the four Australians filling second place in the 800 metres heats' race.

Back in Australia, Boursenaire concentrated on building up his tyre business, which was now beginning to boom after many heart-breaking establishment problems. Soon afterwards he entered civic affairs and in 1928 was elected a Melbourne City Councillor. In 1940 he became Lord Mayor of Melbourne, remaining in office until 1943, when he was knighted.

In 1928 he led a "lobbying" delegation to the Olympic Games in London to convince Melbourne's claims to stage the 1932 Games. The fruit of this effort was in the eventual ballot that gave the Games to Melbourne, by only one vote, over the claims of Buenos Aires.

After his retirement from the Lord Mayoralty Sir Frank held a seat in the Victorian Legislative Council for 10 years.

No man could ask more satisfying fulfillment in a life of sporting, business and civic endeavor than Sir Frank Boursenaire achieved. Yet the sadly Providence that guided him to these successes turned from him, most abruptly it seems.

He died, from a heart attack, on May 29, 1950, at the age of 66—just a few months before Melbourne was to stage the Olympic Games. It seems more than unjust that he should not have been there to see them. ■

BOSS OF BAWDY HOUSE ISLAND

(Continued from page 8)

He stumbled backward, fell off the pier into 20 feet of harbor water.

Other bidders jumped in to save the old man. When Kilmore's limp form was brought to the dock in a dingy, it was too late. Jake Housman's blow to the head had been fatal.

The police, who had co-operated in the deal with Housman, arrested him now for his own safety. He was indicted for manslaughter and placed under a 10,000 dollars bond while track-and-circus gathered on street-corners to talk about the brutal murder.

Scorned by men who had once patronized his bawdyhouse, his money and holdings jeopardized and a possible life term in prison—or a rope—awarding him, Jake Housman acted swiftly. He realized now that Ray West had changed since the early boom days Marine lawyers and maritime commissioners had arrived and with them, pre-aid awards in salvage disputes, intimidation and murder was on the way out.

Housman quietly paid his bail and, protected by a dozen beachmen, slipped from the jailhouse under cover of night. He hurried to the Imperial Palace to gather his stashed money and three of his favorite girls, Clem, Christie, a shapely blonde who had bewitched dozens of men into leaving fortunes with her, openly advised Housman and would have followed him to the end of the earth. She asked where that end was.

"Indian Key!" Housman said. "Plenty of ships pile up on that key every month. With some good storms and good men, I can make a fortune there. It'll be bigger and better than Key West ever was."

Indian Key, viewed in the raw, didn't look much like another Key West. It was inhabited by eight former Gullah Negro slaves who with their families had escaped from their North Carolina masters. The only white man on the key was Mack Bringham, an old timer who with Henry Big Toe stole out a living as a wrecker. Five or six Mamboe Indians and half-breds rounded out the population of the desolate strip of sand, marsh vegetation and rock.

To Jake Housman it was ideal. The island was well out to sea and was surrounded by dangerous rocks. Here he could risked ships and cause them to pile up within a mile or two of the key. Here there would be no judges or federal commissioners to whittle down salvage payments and profits.

"I'm going to be master of this key," Housman told his group. "This time, I keep out everyone but those I own."

Driving Mack Bringham and Henry Big Toe from their hut, he

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"Are come on, Edie, just one."

turned around and hired the pair to work as laborers on a new dwelling — a bawdyhouse. The Indian accepted the loss of an ear without complaint and grabbed eagerly at Houseman's offer of 10 dollars a week. Old Hapham grabbed but also accepted a job.

Pearing to return himself, Houseman dispatched a member of his crew to post a notice at the Key West Labor Exchange. The last line on the poster read: "Free entertainment and congenial women available for men who will work."

A dozen drifters and unskilled hands came over to Indian Key on this promise of good wages, liquor and female companionship. Houseman had already imported building materials and tools, and he hired more and better workmen than he had been able to recruit. He went, armed, to the camp of the Gullah slaves.

The Gullahs lived on a distant end of the key known as Little Paradise Point. Their leader was a 50-year-old ex-slave named Mordeno.

"We are free men now," Mordeno said to Houseman. "We don't aim to work for you."

"You'd be paid," Houseman said. Mordeno shook his head. "We like it this way. We live alone, we have our families and our religion. You go your way, we'll go ours."

"My way is everybody's way," Houseman snarled. "There's not room enough on this island for anything else."

He yanked his pistol from his belt and shot the tall ex-slave between the eyes. Mordeno fell dead at Houseman's feet.

The Gullahs wailed a death prayer. The women clothed in

bands to their breasts in fear. The men looked stonily at the murderer.

"You come with me now," Houseman said. "All of you."

They packed up their possessions and meekly followed him. They were, once again, enslaved.

Using whip, flat and gun, Houseman and his henchmen forced labor crews to toil from dawn to dusk. The Indians and Gullahs were paid meagerly. The white workers, commanding better salaries, quickly landed back every penny they earned to Houseman through his bawdyhouse harlot. In a few months, harbor facilities, offices, cottages, storage sheds and larger warehouses were fully erected — all at virtually no cost but materials to Houseman.

The Gullahs and the Seminoles paid a heavier price. Three Indians were flogged to death and one Negro was shot for not working hard enough to suit the bull-boys. To replace these lost workers, Houseman invited neighboring Seminole groups to his pleasure palace, then kidnapped these unfortunate into virtual slavery.

By December, 1838, Jake and his work gang had completed the Tropical Hotel, a large frame building, which offered billiards, girls, meals and a bar in addition to 50 shabby sleeping rooms. Houseman now made a direct bid for some of the easy money that had formerly flowed into his hands.

The men went to Key West and Florida mainland ports to distribute handbills that extolled the pleasures to be enjoyed at the Tropical Hotel. The first few patrons lurid into his hotel in the fashion discovered that Houseman's



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place offered more attractions than any other inn or resort along the straits or on the Gulf. Word-mouth advertising started a boom in the Tropical Hotel.

Standing in the lobby and watching the long lines of waiting men, Jake Houston made a decision. "I need 30 more women," he told Clara Eldridge. "I'm going to make that manslaughter charge in Key West and go get me some girls."

On September 2 the ball-jumper sailed from Indian Key, but wisely made his destination Charleston, South Carolina. For three weeks Clara and the officers of his Indian Key boat wondered if the ship-wrecker king had finally been brought down. Then he beat her into view amid an hour later, Houston led 27 young and beauty girls down the gangplank onto Indian Key's dock. Among them was a hard-eyed brunette named Elizabeth Ann Koonin, a 21-year-old widow who had operated houses in Savannah, New Orleans and Philadelphia.

"Meet the new manager of the Tropical," Houston said, introducing her around.

Clara Eldridge, the wrecker's number one girl, scolded with rage on learning that Betty Koonin was the new Madame of the Houston brother. Houston grinned and assured her that his arrangement with Betty was professional, in-

tended only to relieve Clara, for mere private assistance to himself.

With his brother in the capable hands of Betty Koonin, Jake was free to concentrate on his ship-wrecker competition from Key West. To his labor crews he offered cash rewards for quick reports on sightings of ships in trouble. In an effort to make these sightings possible, he set adrift each night his usual dinghy with signal lanterns. The number of vessels that struck rocks around Indian Key began to increase, baffling rival wreckers on Key West and at all. They knew Jake Houston.

In retaliation, the wreckers on Key West set the law upon Houston. They complained that his salvage operations were conducted illegally and that awards were made without decision of a board of arbitration, as called for in federal maritime regulations.

Houston studied the statutes. He found that the law required three "disinterested" ship captains as members of such an arbitration board, and he set up on Indian Key a board composed of the most discriminated ship captains in the world. The first of Houston's picked panel was an ex-convict who was shipped away from a Massachusetts asylum, the second was an ex-convict whose only claim to seamanship was that he had captained a fishing smack out of Long Island, and the third was a former ferry boat operator from France who was wanted in Paris on a murder charge.

"You will," Houston instructed his arbitration board, "find only completely fair awards. Of course, there will be free liquor and girls at the Tropical when your decisions are in my favor and maybe even a little cut of the take when there's a really big haul involved."

After one night in the Tropical Hotel, Houston's salvaged salvage arbitrators decided it would be foolish indeed to kill off a good thing. Month after month, their "fair" decisions enabled Houston to make in an average of 15,000 dollars.

Angry ship owners and captains filed formal complaints against Houston, charging piracy, high-handed dealings, and even murder. Indian Key lay in Monroe County and the county seat was Key West, where Houston was a ball-jumper warned on a manslaughter rap. On those occasions when a hearing necessary to face a federal judge at the county seat, Houston was represented by an attorney or some disinterested member of his gang. In most cases, captains and salvaging witnesses were numbered into silence by the strange appear-

ance in court of one or three young ladies from Houston's lowly-house, young ladies the witnesses had frolicked with at the Tropical Hotel.

The memories of such witnesses suddenly became muddled, as did the plaintiff's case against defendant Jake Houston. Federal judges were powerless to act against Houston when charges against him were suddenly dismissed by embarrassed sea captains who had no wish to publicize their after-hours activities with the Tropical Hotel boards.

Houston was particularly angered at a charge made to federal authorities by Seminole sheriff Charles of Sebring and sheriff. When Charles came into Indian Key accompanied by a military inspection team, no evidence of Seminole Indians or slavery could be found. Houston had simply had his Seminoles taken out to sea and dumped overboard.

Charles suspected as much, but lacked proof. He warned Houston, and cautioned his people against visiting the key. The appeal of the ladies in the Tropical, however, was hard for the young backs to resist. First of them ever made a look to their villages on the mainland.

On July 3, 1933, while Houston was relaxing with Betty Koonin in his private room, a Seminole slave worker named Daniel Deer foot stepped up to the Tropical Hotel and banged his fists on the door of Jake's bedroom.

"The French brig Vigilant is aground," he shouted through the door. "The captain and her crew have just come ashore at the pier in a whaleboat."

Houston, never a man to let pleasure interfere with profit, was instantly alert. Over her sleepy protests, he shaved the girl aside and dressed hurriedly. In a matter of minutes he had a group of thugs confronted the French captain at the pier.

Captain Victor Guillaume of the Vigilant was wet and shivering from the sea, but he desperately tried to protect the financial interests of his ship owners, the French-France Company of Cherbourg.

"You say you're carrying silver specie, eyeweed, fusils and narcotics, Captain? Not a bad cargo. I want 25 percent of its value. If I reject the Vigilant and bring her to port, divide quickly — she can break up in two hours on Kaula's Key."

"It is robbery!" screamed the little French master. "Fifteen percent would be ample. You cannot take advantage of me this way, seigneur."

There were four crewmen from the French merchantman who had arrived in the first whaleboat. Other men, in a second boat, had not yet made port. Houston acted quickly. Hanging on a board nearby was a knife used for skinning fish. He grabbed the knife, thrust it into Captain Guillaume's belly. A look of stunned disbelief crossed the man's face just before

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he sunk into a lifeless heap. Houseman, mad with joy, Ivan Fyve, one of his men "Kick this quana into the water, Fyve. Whirl the first mate of the Vige boat! I want to talk business with somebody who does things my way."

A thin man with curling mustache and a lined, sallow face stepped forward. "I am Delacroix, the mate. I will do business with you. Your terms are satisfactory."

Houseman used the knife to flick a loose button from the mate's blue jacket.

"You're a smart man. We'll get along. Mind you, not a word about your captain's death to the authorities, understand? If anybody from the Pigskin blames me for it, I'll be hard on him. You are an Indian Key man. My word is law here."

"I understand, monsieur."

The Pigskin was reflected by Houseman's wretches without too much difficulty. They towed her to port and Jake himself — refusing to let any of the French crew enter the hold — took three of his trusted employees and disappeared below deck.

The late Captain Gullhouse had been transporting 200,000 dollars in silver bars from Boston to Havana. For five hours, Houseman and his men carried the crates barehanded and transferred them to his own horse-drawn wagon which made repeated trips to a guarded warehouse.

The next morning, Delacroix went mildly. "Did you take off all the silver, monsieur? There was quite a large amount. Remember,

we are still entitled to 35 percent."

Houseman said coldly, "Your arithmetic is very bad, Frenchman. You got nothing, which is zero. Be glad that you're still alive."

This was the Frenchman, Delacroix, added to the growing membership of the "Babe Houseman" club. The belligerent, self-styled king of Key West was too intent on making his ill-fortune to notice that even those close to him were smothering with resentment against his high-handed ways.

Girls in the Tropical Hotel, chosen from their normal cut of the brothel trade, were grossing cold to the men they worked for. Betty Keenly remained loyal, but Houseman was grossly keeping cash and girls on the slim margin. Clara Eldridge, his displaced mistress, was openly defiant and in a mannered mood. Houseman's crew of captives had grown, and been cooled, a larger share in the wrecked-rocket booty. They were dissatisfied. The Gullhouse crew and the Seminoles Indians needed only a spark of leadership to fire their true revolt.

On a particularly hot day in 1930 the spark arrived—a bosomy, tap-dancing widow who could out-curse a scoundrel or out-argue a church terror, on the occasion demanded. Descendant of an old Rhode Island seafaring family, Rhoda Helen Greene Dixon opened a ship chandlery on Indian Key but loudly announced her real mission—she was there to run Jake Houseman off the island.

"This place is a stretch in the name of decent people," she barked. "Indian Key belongs to

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the United States, not to Jake Housman."

Housman and Betty Koombs had a good laugh at Bathsheba Dixon's crisscrossed-golf challenge. "In six weeks," Housman told the woman to try her, "your business will be a failure."

"And the day after that," Betty grinned, "you'll be working for me in one of the upstairs rooms at the Tropical."

Bathsheba Dixon ignored them. She sought out the decent residents of the key and tried to convince them of a need to stand up to Housman. This effort was a roaring flop. She discovered only that fear of Housman was as great as fear of death and greater than fear of the Horvaths.

Housman watched the pathetic efforts of Bathsheba and her devoted servant, a former Irish sailor named George Aderskide, who was called Captain Jack, and dismissed her as nothing more than a loud-mouthed pest.

Toward the end of that summer an epidemic of yellow fever hit the key. Among the many struck down by the dreaded disease were five prostitutes employed in Jake Housman's Tropical Hotel. Bathsheba forced her way into the kitchen and announced her intention of nursing the girls.

"They have chosen the path of sin," she said to Housman, "but I would be more a sinner were I to ignore their time of need."

For her work at the Tropical Hotel, where she saved all five of Housman's girls, and at the famous Indian encampment, Bathsheba Dixon became the first heroine of Indian Key. She took on stature equal to Housman's own, and this infuriated the ship-wrecker.

After the epidemic, Bathsheba resumed her hammering away at Housman and his brutality.

"This place isn't big enough for both of us," Housman warned her. "One of us has got to leave."

Bathsheba laughed recklessly. "Go ahead, Housman. I'm staying."

Housman went directly to the bar of the Tropical Hotel, with the intention of rounding up a couple of thugs and disposing of the Bathsheba Dixon problem. Whatever his plans, they were stopped cold by Clara Eldridge.

"Lay a hand on Mrs. Dixon," Clara warned, "and every girl in the joint pulls out."

Housman looked at a row of angry, cold-creamed faces, and knew this was so. He knew, too, that without sex his entire scheme was jeopardized. He gave up on Bathsheba Dixon and instead cracked down on the group of Semanole Indians she had befriended during the fever epidemic.

He put into stocks Semanoles who displeased him when they came to the key to barter for trinkets. He denied them admission to the hotel — which made Chief Chalkie angry — but he sold them trinkets at inflated prices. When

a couple of whiskey-crashed Semanoles began to bust up his barroom, Housman had them thrown off the key and threatened to kill them if they returned.

"We kill 'em!" one Indian shouted. "You do, Housman!"

This threat pricked heavily on Housman's mind. He took to carrying an extra pistol in his belt and ordered his men to keep a sleep ready for a quick getaway in the event Chief Chalkie and his Semanoles attacked the key in force. "I'll kill everyone of them if it was legal," he went to Betty Koombs.

An idea struck him. He decided to make Indian-killing legal. He wrote to the governor of Florida, to Congress, and to the President of the United States suggesting that he send his "police force" to be empowered to catch and kill every Indian in the territory of Florida. In typical Housman style, he could not resist adding that a bounty of 200 dollars per head might be a fair reward.

His murderous scheme was rejected everywhere. But word of his offer somehow reached the ears of Chief Chalkie.

"Chalkie will wear your scalp on his belt," Bathsheba Dixon teased Housman one day. "You've come too far."

"I'll make sure of that savage," Housman said. "I'll take care of everything on this key."

That night the ship chandlery, office, and storage shed owned by Bathsheba Dixon erupted into flame and burned to the ground. A strong risk of coal oil hung over the wreckage. There was little doubt it was a case of arson.

Two days later Bathsheba Dixon's Captain Jack overboard William Parsons, a roustabout employed by Housman, boat drunkenly in the Crescent Bar:

"We sure showed Bathsheba! She's got nothing left. Housman and me set the fire. Now how is the gonna earn a living on Indian Key?"

This news was quickly relayed to Bathsheba. In the front yard of her modest cottage, she addressed an angry mob of Cuban Negroes, women from Housman's hotel, disgruntled French seamen from the Yacht and other enemies of Jake Housman.

"This killer begs that he be in the law on Indian Key. If we let him set as judge and jury, punishing the innocent and burning and shooting without fear, then we deserve what we get. I say let's get Housman and put him in his own jail. Then we'll hold a fair trial and decide what to do with him."

Housman and his men had just divided the proceeds from refitting the vessel Pacific, whose skipper — working covertly with Jake — had driven his ship aground near the mouth of the Newfoundland River. In Housman's pocket was a signed document awarding him 20,000 dollars in salvage fees.

Celebrating drunkenly with the Pacific's crooked skipper, Hous-

man was unaware that the Tropical Hotel had been quietly surrounded. They were revelry and the sound of breaking bottles in the island hall. In the inn's upstairs rooms, a group of newly-arrived boarders from New Orleans entertained members of the Pacific's crew.

Housman, joining himself on perfume and wine, with champagne around his mistress, Betty Koombs, was taken by surprise when Captain Jack locked open the door of the hotel dining room and pressed a knife to the ship-wrecker's throat. Behind Jack stood eight Cubans armed with machetes and knives. Housman also saw the dark-brooded boy of Delacroix, the mate of the Yacht and a party of angry French sailors.

Housman's headmen, converting drunkenly with girls and playing cards with the sailors of the Pacific, were quickly dismissed by Bathsheba Dixon's friends. His face contorted with fury, Housman screamed:

"You'll be sorry for this, Bathsheba Dixon! I run Indian Key. I'll see to it that you all hang for this!"

The woman's reply was quiet but meaningful. "Perhaps . . . if you don't hang first."

Housman and his cut-throats were thrown into the jailhouse.

That night was heavy and oppressive. Bathsheba Dixon walked to her bedroom window for some fresh air and looked at the jetty 200 yards away. She shivered in fear. Long canoes were gliding quietly into the pier. In the moonlight, she could see heavily armed Indians coming ashore. Semanoles in full war paint.

The dark figures slipped around to the Tropical Hotel and towards houses where residents of the key were lying asleep. The door of Bathsheba's cottage was flung open.

She wanted to scream but no sound came from her throat. A tall, bearded man, naked to the waist, ran over to her bed.

"Quiet, woman," he said. "We mean no harm. There is only one person we seek — the white killer, Housman."

Bathsheba could only stare.

The Indian turned suddenly and hurried outside. Some minutes later Bathsheba heard a man's scream from the direction of the jail. Bathsheba Dixon hastily donned a bathrobe and hurried with other residents of Indian Key to the primitive jail. The Semanole rulers were gone.

The Indian, Harry Jay Fox, was the first man to enter the cell in which Housman had been lodged. He came out at once and vanished.

Mock lightning and several other men went inside to carry out the bloodstained corpse of Jacob Housman. He had been scalped first, then a knife had been driven deep into his heart.

"Wow," Bathsheba Dixon said, shuddering. "There will be peace on Indian Key."



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